

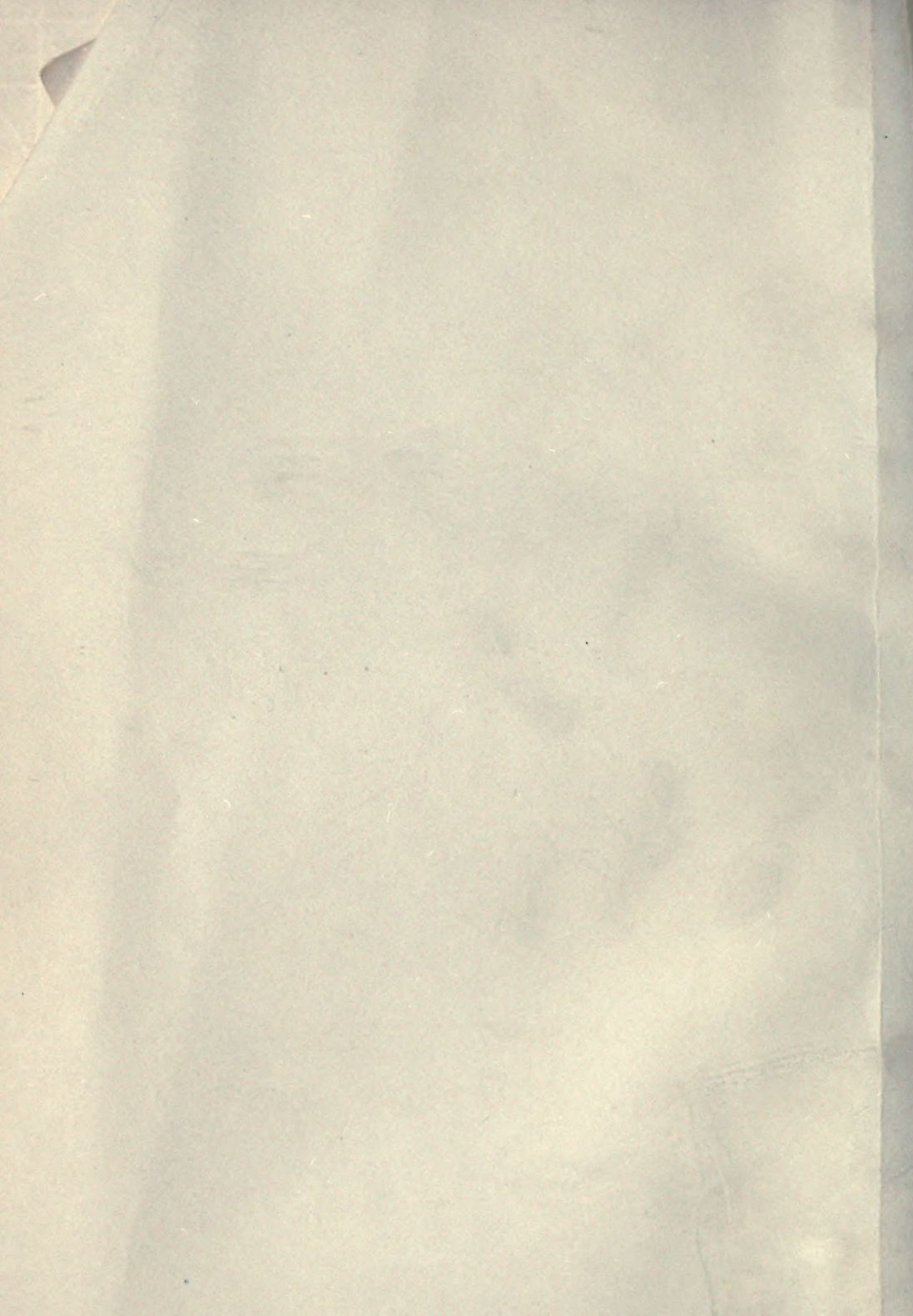


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*Shakespeare's  
Merry Wives of Windsor 1602*

Henry Frowde, M.A.  
Publisher to the University of Oxford  
London, Edinburgh, New York  
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*Shakespeare's*  
*Merry Wives of Windsor*

1602

Edited by  
W. W. GREG Litt.D.



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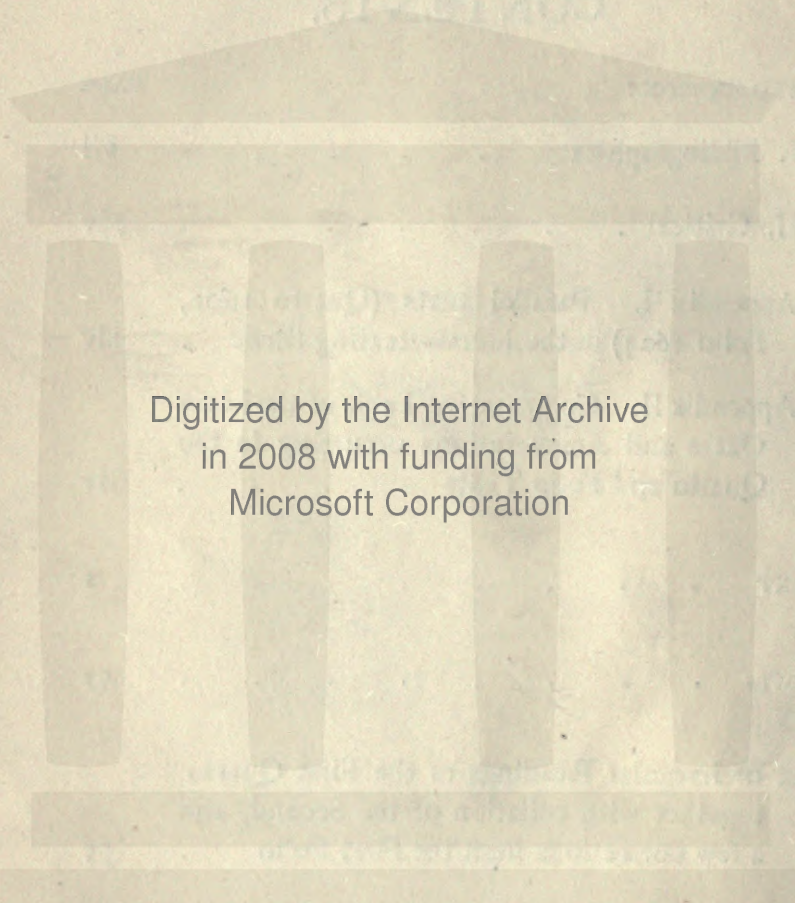
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# INTRODUCTION.

## I. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

THE following entries relating to the *Merry Wives* appear on the Registers of the Stationers' Company:

18 Ianuarij [1602] . . .

John Busby Entred for his copie vnder the hand  
of master Seton / A booke called An  
excellent and pleasant conceited } vjd  
commedie of Sir Iohn ffaulstof and the  
merry wyves of Windesor

Arthure Iohnson Entred for his Copye by assignement  
from Iohn Busbye, A booke Called an  
excellent and pleasant conceyted Comedie  
of Sir Iohn ffaulstafe and the merye wyves  
of Windsor . . . . . vjd

[Arber's Transcript, iii. 199.]

I do not propose to discuss in this place the significance of the transactions here recorded, since to do so at all adequately would involve a considerable excursion into a difficult region of Shakespearian bibliography.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say that while the entry implies that the publication of the play was in more or less immediate projection, the transfer does not imply, as some have thought, that publication had already taken place. It followed, however, with no long delay, for the date 1602 on the title-page of the quarto shows that the volume was issued in any case before 25 March 1603, most probably before the end of December 1602. The likelihood is thus strongly in favour of its having been an

<sup>1</sup> On this and other points the reader who desires information will find it in the admirable pages of my friend Mr. A. W. Pollard's study of *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*.

Elizabethan

Elizabethan publication, while it may have seen the light as much as a year before the death of the sovereign to whose whim tradition ascribes the composition of the play.

The quarto was printed for the holder of the copy-right, Arthur Johnson, by Thomas Creede, a well-known printer, whose initials are familiar to bibliographers from many other volumes beside the present. The type is an ordinary roman fount of a body closely approximating to modern English (20 ll. = 94 mm.).

Of this quarto four copies are known. The only quite perfect copy is that formerly in the possession of Edward Capell and now in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. In this is preserved the leaf signed 'A' before the title-page, which is wanting in the other three. Unfortunately it is somewhat cropt at the foot. The Bodleian Library possesses an otherwise sound copy that once belonged to Edmund Malone, and Mr. A. H. Huth another from the collection of George Daniel. The fourth copy is now at Chatsworth, having been added by the sixth Duke of Devonshire to the collection purchased some time before 1823 from J. P. Kemble. Its previous history seems not to be recorded. It is badly cropt at the top and wants one leaf of text (G3).

A second quarto appeared with the date 1619. The title-page runs:

A | Most pleasant and ex-|cellent conceited Comedy,  
| of Sir Iohn Falstaffe, and the | merry VVives of VVindsor.  
| VVith the swaggering vaine of An-|cient Pistoll, and  
Corporall Nym. | Written by W. SHAKESPEARE. |  
[device] | Printed for *Arthur Johnson*, 1619.

This quarto was printed by Isaac Jaggard and bears on the title-page his device with the motto 'Heb Ddieu Heb Ddim'.<sup>1</sup> The mention of Arthur Johnson

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Daniel in his introduction to Griggs' facsimile of the first quarto states that the 1619 title-page bears Smethwick's punning device with the motto 'Non altum peto'—but this is an error.



in the imprint is apparently a mere acknowledgement of copyright, for the quarto was almost certainly published by Thomas Pavier.<sup>2</sup> This second quarto is a mere reprint of the first. It presents few serious differences of reading and these of no authority. Such as they are they will be found recorded in the list given below (p. 95). It is a comparatively common book, no less than nineteen copies being recorded, while others no doubt have escaped observation. It may be seen in the British Museum, Bodleian, Trinity College Cambridge, and Dyce (South Kensington) Libraries.

In the collected folio of 1623 the play was printed from an entirely independent manuscript, which offered a text different throughout from that of the earlier quartos. The relationship of these two texts forms the subject of the second part of the present introduction. A quarto of 1630 was printed from the folio.

The first quarto was reprinted as 'the first sketch' of the *Merry Wives* for the Shakespeare Society in 1842 with an introduction and notes by J. O. Halliwell. The text is not very accurate. A reprint of this reprint was included in 1875 by W. C. Hazlitt in his 'Shakespeare's Library' (Pt. II. vol. ii).

The quarto was again reprinted, also as an 'early sketch', with a collation (incomplete) of the second quarto, but otherwise unedited, in the 'Cambridge Shakespeare' (1863, vol. i; 1893, vol. ix). This is a far more satisfactory performance.

The second quarto was reprinted by Steevens in 1760 in his 'Twenty Plays'; the first quarto being at the time inaccessible.

The first quarto has also been twice reproduced in facsimile. The first occasion was in 1866, when it was lithographed by E. W. Ashbee from hand-made tracings under Halliwell's guidance. The second was in 1881,

<sup>2</sup> See Pollard, *op. cit.*

when an undated photo-lithographic facsimile was produced by William Griggs with a valuable introduction by P. A. Daniel, who also added marginal references to the folio text.

Of Ashbee's facsimile only 50 copies were printed and of these 19 were destroyed, the remaining 31 being numbered and signed by Halliwell. It is therefore a rare book seldom available for students, while its method of reproduction is obsolete. It appears, however, to be correct. It is not stated from what copy it was reproduced, nor is it possible to discover, since any imperfections have been made good. It must, however, presumably be of composite origin, since it reproduces the first leaf with the signature 'A' only found in the Capell copy, and it is known that this copy was not at Halliwell's disposal. The 'A' is wrongly placed on the page, and was probably added from knowledge indirectly obtained.

The Griggs facsimile can only be described as very bad. It was produced at a moderate price to meet the requirements of students, but it sacrificed most of the qualities that might have rendered it useful. It not only suffers from the dirty appearance of inferior lithographic work, but, what is worse, its text is quite untrustworthy, being not only illegible but sometimes doctored. I give below a list of the differences I have found between the facsimile on the one hand and the Capell and Malone copies, which agree in all minutiae, on the other. The punctuation in the facsimile is indistinct throughout, and only obvious and serious errors are noticed; while no attention has been paid to the numerous cases in which an 'f' is made to resemble 'f', and vice versa. The facsimile was made from the Devonshire copy (it omits the leaf signed 'A'), and it might therefore be supposed that the variations it presented from the originals at Oxford and Cambridge were due to the differences so often found between  
various



various copies of one original edition. This, however, is not the case. I selected eight clear and typical variations of the facsimile (those marked with an asterisk in my list) and had these checked with the Devonshire and Huth copies respectively.<sup>1</sup> In every case the facsimile was reported to be in error. We may therefore reasonably conclude that there are no textual differences in the originals. The list of errors in the facsimile is as follows:

<i>sig.</i>	<i>line</i>	<i>original</i>	<i>Griggs</i>
A 3	H.T.	Co- medie,	Co- medie.
	I *	Hugh, <i>Maiſter</i>	Hugh <i>Maiſter</i>
A 3 <sup>v</sup>	29	heare?	heare.
	33	answered.	answered
	42	mee?	mee.
A 4	65		(defaced)
	77	hart,	hart
	78 *	Slender <i>and</i>	Slender
A 4 <sup>v</sup>	95		(defaced)
B 1 <sup>v</sup>	137	Rooke?	Rooke.
	153	trade,	trade
B 2 <sup>v</sup>	208	become?	become.
B 3 <sup>v</sup>	280 *	be . . . be	he . . . be
	287	-houſe?	-houſe:
B 4	316	fack,	fack
B 4 <sup>v</sup>	339 *	again:	again.
	347	like,	like.
	348	line,	line
C 1	361	forſt:	forſt.
C 1 <sup>v</sup>	390	comming.	comming
	391 *	<i>Pa.</i>	<i>Ba.</i>

<sup>1</sup> I am deeply indebted to the kindness of Mr. A. H. Huth for information on this and other points concerning the copy in his collection, and to that of Mrs. S. A. Strong, till lately librarian to the Duke of Devonshire, for similar information concerning the copy at Chatsworth.

<i>sig.</i>	<i>line</i>	<i>original</i>	<i>Griggs</i>
	403	wife,	wife
C 2 <sup>v</sup>	464	<i>omnes.</i>	<i>omnes</i>
C 3	514	fir,	fir.
C 3 <sup>v</sup>	525	thee :	thee
	542	vp,	vp.
C 4	553	fir,	fir.
	559	fir,	fir
D 1 <sup>v</sup>	673	vallor.	vallor
D 2	688	Doctor.	Doctor
D 3 <sup>v</sup>	783	<i>Cayus,</i>	<i>Cayus</i>
	789	house,	house.
D 4	818	S. Hu	S Hu
E 1	871 *	cōming	coming
E 1 <sup>v</sup>	918	him :	him.
E 2	939	more,	more
	951	<i>omnes:</i>	<i>omnes.</i>
E 4 <sup>v</sup>	1109	<i>An,</i>	<i>An.</i>
	1111		<i>omits first I</i>
F 1	1149	yet.	yet
F 1 <sup>v</sup>	1164	chimney.	chimney
	1165	Fow-   ling	Fow   ling
F 2 <sup>v</sup>	1218	indeed,	indeed.
F 4	1326	her,	her.
F 4 <sup>v</sup>	1363 *	care	care
	1370	<i>Bardolfe,</i>	<i>Bardolfe.</i>
G 3	1526	you.	you,
	1530	head,	head
G 4	1566		(defaced)
G 4 <sup>v</sup>	1614 *	stai'd	stai d

We have here exactly 50 cases in which the facsimile fails to represent the original correctly. Of these 41 are due to small flaws of workmanship, in five cases a portion of a line has been wiped off the plate, while in four cases (ll. 1, 280, 391, 1363) there must have been deliberate manipulation. These details should be borne



borne in mind by editors who may be tempted to make use of these facsimiles for critical purposes. Some other volumes of the series are even more seriously inaccurate. But this does not close the indictment. The last paragraph of A. P. Daniel's introduction runs as follows :

‘The facsimile is mainly from the Duke of Devonshire's copy of the Play ; but one leaf, sign. G 3, being out of that, and pages 43 and 53 [i. e. F3<sup>v</sup>, G4<sup>v</sup>] being imperfect, the facsimiles of those four pages are from Mr Alfred H. Huth's copy, which he has been kind enough to lend for the purpose.’

I do not suppose that Daniel was ultimately responsible for these statements, but merely passed on information supplied by others. Anyway, the statements are entirely incorrect. Pages 43 and 53 are not more imperfect than others in the Devonshire copy, and it is clearly from that copy that the facsimiles were made, for they show the pages badly cropt at the top as they there are, whereas in the Huth copy they are untouched. The leaf G3 (pp. 50-1) is correctly stated to be wanting in the Devonshire copy. The reproductions offered, however, are not made directly from the Huth copy as stated, but actually from Ashbee's hand-traced facsimile.

A word must be added with regard to the present reprint. It is intended to be a type-facsimile of the first quarto except in the matter of wrong founts, turned letters, irregular spacing and indentation, and similar purely typographical details. It has been set up from and read with photographs of the Malone copy of the original at the Bodleian, and has also been carefully collated with the Capell copy at Trinity College, Cambridge. As explained above, certain readings in which it was suspected that copies of the original might differ, were checked with the copies belonging to the Duke of Devonshire and Mr. A. H. Huth. No variations

tions have been detected. In order to bring the reprint within the range of a uniform series a type about one size smaller than the original has had to be employed. The pages have been numbered at the foot, there being no pagination or foliation in the original. The lines of print exclusive of title-page, head-title, running-title, signatures and catchwords, have also been numbered and recorded within brackets at the foot of each page, together with the corresponding reference to the lines of the folio text as printed and numbered in the Globe edition. It must be understood that these correspondencies are of a merely approximate nature. The student desirous of following the matter further may be referred to the marginalia added by Daniel to Griggs' facsimile, but a really close comparison of the two versions can hardly be made without a parallel-text edition. I hope, however, that the references I have given will facilitate comparison with the standard text, and so help to the ready understanding of the notes.

I append to my notes a list of such obvious typographical errors and irregularities as appear in the quarto of 1602 and are not of sufficient interest to be discussed elsewhere, together with some corrections from the folio text, and a full collation of the variant readings of the quarto of 1619.

## II. CRITICAL.

It will hardly, I conceive, be demanded that one who has made himself responsible for the humble task of reprinting the first quarto of the *Merry Wives* should produce a full critical apparatus to that play or should discuss the many and varied problems of literary history that surround it. That is the business of whoever undertakes to edit the more or less authoritative version provided by the folio of 1623. On the other hand it may be reasonably expected of one who turns his attention particularly to this despised quarto that he  
should



should at least make some endeavour to solve the perplexing but fundamental problem of the relationship of the two extant versions of the play. When I lightheartedly set out upon this quest I very soon found that it demanded a far more minute investigation of the texts than I had originally imagined. The broad outline of the facts seemed fairly clear and well established, but no general theory appeared capable of explaining in detail the phenomena presented. I was forced to construct for my own convenience a parallel-text edition, by cutting up and pasting into a notebook copies of the present reprint of the quarto and of one of the ordinary modern editions of the folio text. I then began writing detailed notes on the peculiarities of the quarto version, and at last found myself with a mass of material upon which it seemed possible to base something like a critical opinion. To present the final judgement, however, in an acceptable form apart from the analysis upon which it was founded appeared a difficult, if not impossible, task, and I was driven, after some hesitation, to revise my material and put it forward in the shape of a critical commentary on the text. It should, however, be carefully observed that this commentary concerns the quarto alone, and only in so far as it differs from the folio version. Points which are common to the two texts fall within the province of the general Shakespearian editor, a responsible post to which I have neither claim nor ambition.

I ought to say a word as to the predecessors whose work I have used. Halliwell reprinted the quarto text in 1842 with critical apparatus. He assumed that the quarto represented a first sketch of the play and allowed no further discussion of the relation of the texts. His introduction is almost wholly devoted to a consideration of the play in general, and his notes contain little that can be of use to the modern student. There are two other writers, however, to whom I am seriously indebted.

The

The first of these is Mr. P. A. Daniel, whose short but valuable introduction to the Griggs facsimile contained the first serious contribution to the discussion. The second is the late H. C. Hart, whose critical edition of the play (from the folio, of course) appeared under the aegis of that encyclopedic Shakespearian, the late W. J. Craig. This is, at almost every point, an admirable piece of work, and not only is the delicate question of the relation of the texts most intelligently discussed in the introduction, but many of the peculiarities of the quarto version also receive detailed attention and lucid criticism in the ample notes with which the edition is furnished.

It will, I think, facilitate matters if, before turning to the discussion of the quarto, we consider briefly certain peculiarities of the folio. This, which derives from an altogether independent source, must be admitted to present a distinctly good, though demonstrably not perfect, text. The nature of the manuscript from which it was printed has never, I think, been determined. As a rule early printed editions of plays, when not manifestly corrupt, go back to manuscripts of two kinds: prompt copies—more or less official versions preserved in the playhouses; and private copies—transcripts made for literary circulation. The relative frequency and the distinctive characters of these two types are points not yet clearly established, but they need not be canvassed here, for it is pretty certain that the manuscript from which the *Merry Wives* was printed in the folio of 1623 was not characteristic of either class. Its distinguishing feature is that it is carefully divided into acts and scenes, and that each of the latter is headed by a list of all the characters who appear on the stage in the course of it, no indication being afforded of their individual entries and exits. This arrangement would be equally preposterous for the purposes either of a literary or of a playhouse manuscript. Its origin, however, is not far to seek. It is obviously the work of



a painstaking but hardly intelligent devil charged with the duty of preparing the play for press. It must be remembered that in 1623 the only precedent for a collection of dramatic works by an English author was Ben Jonson's folio of 1616. Now Jonson had the fancy to divide his plays on what is sometimes called the classical or continental method, beginning a new scene whenever there was a change in the characters on the stage. When this method of division is adopted it is usual, instead of indicating the change of characters by exits and entrances, to give a list of characters at the head of each scene. But the principle adopted by Jonson has never been common in England, and none of Shakespeare's plays are divided in accordance with its demands. The *Merry Wives* follows the native custom of beginning a new scene only when there is a break in the continuity of the action, and the text to be intelligible must be provided with the necessary entries and exits. Whoever prepared the manuscript for press applied the Jonsonian method of character indication to the English method of scene division, with singularly unhappy results. Either a complete transcript was made for purposes of the press, or else an already existing manuscript was rather elaborately doctored. Whether the undoctored manuscript or the original of the press transcript belonged to the literary or to the playhouse type I know no evidence to determine.

'The text of the *Merry Wives* given in F1 was probably printed,' according to the Cambridge editors, 'from a carelessly written copy of the author's MS.' 'My theory as to F<sup>o</sup>1,' remarks Daniel, 'goes somewhat beyond this, and for "carelessly written copy of the author's MS." I would say, "carelessly shortened copy," &c.' Hart, while professing the greatest respect for the folio text, and as an editor rightly deprecating any avoidable departure therefrom, practically adopts Daniel's view with certain ingenious elaborations of his own.

An examination of the text will show the grounds upon which these opinions are based. There are, to begin with, certain mutilations in the folio text to which the readings of the quarto supply the clue, and editors have at various times borrowed quite a number of passages from the quarto to make good supposed lacunae in the folio edition. In many instances their action was undoubtedly illegitimate and based upon the most vicious critical methods, and more recent editors have been sparing in adopting such a device, but in a few cases there is really no choice in the matter. Hart, for whose judgement I have the highest regard even when differing from him on points of detail, was indeed of opinion (p. xxi) that only one of these insertions could be considered as 'absolutely essential' (l. 773), but in two other instances (ll. 758 and 1376) he followed the Cambridge editors in admitting them into his text, within brackets.<sup>1</sup> The earlier of these insertions does seem open to criticism, but the second is most certainly needed. Hart also considered that a good deal might be said in favour of the genuineness of four other passages of the quarto which do not figure in the folio text, namely ll. 44, 129, 162, and 401. In the case of the second of these I most emphatically disagree, and I think Hart must have overlooked the fact that the line is really misplaced. Nor do I think the third will stand examination. On the other hand I

<sup>1</sup> He has also followed the Cambridge editors in at least one other serious departure from the folio text. 'With regard', wrote the latter (i. 311), 'to . . . passages . . . inserted from the early Quartos, our rule has been to introduce, between brackets, such, and such only, as seemed to be absolutely essential to the understanding of the text.' Nevertheless at III. v. 90, where the folio reads: 'Yes: a Buck-basket:' the editors follow Malone in substituting the reading of the quarto, printing: 'By the Lord, a buck-basket!' It is no doubt likely that the reading of the folio is due to some reformer working on the text after the statute of James I against profanity, but nevertheless the alteration, which is certainly not 'essential', is an even greater interference with the folio text than mere insertions, and unlike them is made without the precaution of brackets.



would add ll. 106-10, where I think the folio reading unsatisfactory, and l. 958, where I certainly prefer that of the quarto. I also agree with the Cambridge editors in thinking that there must be further mutilations in the folio where the quarto affords us no help. A case in point is discussed at l. 1264, the folio being, I think, clearly defective, while the quarto text is too divergent to be legitimately used for correction.

So much for the minor defects of the folio version. Two charges of a more serious nature have been brought against its authenticity. One is based on the confusion of time-data in sc. xi (III. v). This has been discussed by Daniel (in his introduction to the facsimile and in papers to which reference is there made) who thinks the entanglement 'caused by what I suppose must have been some managerial attempt to compress two scenes, representing portions of two separate days, into one'. This view is endorsed by Hart (p. xiii). For reasons fully set forth in my notes on sc. xi, I do not think any condensation such as is here contemplated could possibly have produced the confusion found in the text,<sup>1</sup> and I am forced to the conclusion that the difficulty is inherent and caused by an oversight of the author himself. In this case, there-

<sup>1</sup> The supposed parallel case in the quarto of *Henry V* is a myth. In his Introduction to the parallel texts of that play (New Shakspeare Society, 1877) Daniel writes: 'At its best, Q<sup>o</sup>. 1 merely represents a version of the play shortened for the stage. The two scenes in the French Camp [III. vii and IV. ii] were cut down to one; and the person who did the job, without perceiving the blunder he was committing, wanting a tag to finish off with, brought in the sun at midnight!'—that is to say he appended the final couplet of IV. ii to his mutilated version of III. vii. This is properly mere confusion not amalgamation of two scenes. Moreover, Daniel's theory is outrageously improbable. What obviously happened was that a dull reporter inadvertently tacked on the couplet to his reconstruction of the first French camp scene and omitted the second altogether. The confusion proves the exact opposite of what Daniel imagined, namely that IV. ii was *not* omitted on the stage.

fore,

fore, I regard the genuineness of the folio tradition as fully established.

Not so with regard to the second charge, which concerns the horse-stealing episode and the famous 'garmombles' passage. Here Daniel and Hart take opposite sides, the one rejecting and the other asserting an allusion to Count Mumpellgart, but both agree that the plot as it stands (it is substantially the same in the two versions) cannot represent the original composition. The story is conveyed entirely by hints and innuendoes, which would have no meaning on the stage and hardly yield up their secret even to the most careful reading. Daniel had but a dim idea of their significance. He speaks, indeed, of the plot of 'the reconciled duellists' Evans and Caius, and hints at the complicity of Pistol and Nym in their revenge upon mine Host, but concludes, 'this, I must admit, is somewhat idle speculation; the plot, if it ever had existence, is irrecoverably lost, and all that can be said with certainty is that something is wanting to render this part of the play intelligible.'

To Hart belongs the credit of having recovered the outline, at least, of these obscure transactions (p. lxx). Though the account he gives of the plot may not be capable of verification in every detail, he has played the literary detective with skill and considerable success, and his results are of the greatest importance for the criticism of the play. The main conclusion is that this portion of the text cannot have come down to us in its original form. Shakespeare does not usually construct plots which are unintelligible on the stage and in the study demand the methods of Sherlock Holmes for their unravelling. Moreover, a close examination of the two texts will reveal a number of passages, easily overlooked in a rapid reading, which are almost certainly as it were loose ends of this same plot, which remain adhering to the fabric of the play in disconsolate fatuity. The main fragments of this plot will be found noted at ll. 782,



951, 1232, 1344, 1399, while more obscure hints are discussed at ll. 1530, 1561, and 1586.

Hart accuses the folio of yet further corruption. 'I have noticed,' he says (p. xiv), 'especially in the Fifth Act, certain lines that are so wretched here and there, that they may be assumed to have been foisted in by one or other of the actors from time to time, and got mixed up with the text.' It is not easy to see how actors' gag or alterations could creep into the written copy 'from time to time', but if anything occurred to necessitate a general revision of a portion at least of the text, tags and substitutions that had become traditional might easily get incorporated. We know that in certain passages of the fifth act at least (e.g. ll. 1473, &c.) the two extant texts cannot represent the same original, so that revision of some sort must have taken place, and I have myself argued that one line of the folio text may be due to an actor's interpolation (see note on l. 1484).

'In the Fourth and Fifth Acts,' continues Hart, 'I think we can find evidences of the unexpunged bits of the shortened version'—that is the version adapted for certain theatrical demands. Here the critic is alluding to the clumsy repetition which undoubtedly occurs in connexion with the threefold abduction of Anne Page, and to the inferior writing observable in some parts, particularly in the account of the fairy preparations given by Fenton to mine Host (sc. xvii=IV. vi).<sup>1</sup> 'Here, I imagine, Fenton's account is possibly spurious, and was a substitution in the supposed shorter edition for subsequent matter . . . and that on the publishing of the full text it was allowed to remain in its present needlessly expansive and unpoetical garb.' Hart's theory, then, is that the excision of

<sup>1</sup> Hart also remarks that 'we have all these minutiae repeated . . . in the stage-directions before and after the pinching dance', forgetting that these do not occur in the folio.

certain

certain passages in the stage version (notably V. i-iv, I suppose) necessitated the insertion of information as to the details of the plot in the scene between Fenton and mine Host (IV. vi). It is necessary, however, to point out that the quarto either does or does not represent this shortened stage version. If it does it is very doubtful, as will be shown later, whether V. i-iv were really omitted; if it does not the appearance in it of the Fenton scene, mangled indeed but still recognizably the same, demands explanation.<sup>1</sup>

I hesitate to offer an opinion on the folio text in opposition to so able an editor as Hart, but I cannot deny that his theory seems to me inadequate to account for the facts. My own feeling is that the whole of the latter part of the play has been worked over at some time or other, and that probably by a hand different from that of the original author. The horse-stealing plot must once have occupied a far more prominent position than that now assigned to it, and it seems to me in the highest degree probable, from the indications that remain, that its solution was intimately bound up with that of the main plot. If that was so, then, when circumstances (upon the nature of which I offer no opinion) led to the modification and, indeed, almost the suppression of this episode, a very considerable amount of reconstruction must have become necessary. What remained of the fourth and fifth acts had to be altered and expanded in such a manner as to form an intelligible and not too summary conclusion. This I think will amply account for the clumsy repetitions and the inferior composition which attracted Hart's attention in so unfavourable a manner. To this subject I shall have to revert in discussing the nature of the quarto text.

<sup>1</sup> Hart further proceeds to comment on repetitions 'in the wording of Falstaff's two escapes' (III. iii. 211-37 and IV. ii. 127-64). The bearing of this, however, is not obvious, for there can be no question of these two scenes having ever been amalgamated.



On this final count, therefore, the folio text must decidedly be condemned as unoriginal. There is this difference between Hart's view and mine. He does not allow that the folio represents any genuine version at all, being in his opinion a contamination of a full authoritative text by a recognized acting abridgement. I believe that the folio (save for minor errors) does faithfully represent the full authoritative text current in the playhouse at the date of publication. We agree, however, in holding that this authoritative text was not entirely authentic, Hart maintaining that certain passages had been bodily excised, and I believing that, not only was this so, but that what remained had been subjected to very considerable reconstruction in the last two acts.

We are now in a position to attack the problem of the quarto. The question that faces us is: What is the basis of the quarto text, and what relation does it bear to that preserved in the folio?

As already mentioned, the idea that the quarto represented Shakespeare's first sketch of a play later elaborated appeared to Halliwell in 1842 so self-evident that he seems hardly to have considered the question at all. Again, in 1863 the Cambridge editors spoke of the quarto as an 'early sketch', and these words were allowed to stand in the edition of 1893 in spite of the challenge which the orthodox view had meanwhile encountered.

So far as I am aware Daniel was the first seriously to traverse this opinion. He pointed out, as early as 1881, that though the quarto might here and there correct the folio text, it presented other passages which seemed unintelligible without the help of the folio. He continued: 'Each in turn convicts the other as imperfect; but whether their imperfections are to be attributed to a greater or less departure from one common original, or from two authentic versions (*a sketch and a completed work*),

*work*), it is perhaps impossible with certainty to decide. A probable solution of the question is all I propose to myself in these pages.' 'My conviction,' he continues, 'is in favour of one common original for both versions. . . . The true origin of the Q<sup>o</sup> I believe to be as follows:—The play was first shortened for stage representation: to the performance the literary hack, employed by the stationer to obtain a copy, resorted with his note-book. Perhaps he managed to take down some portions of the dialogue pretty accurately in short-hand, or obtained them by the assistance of some of the people connected with the theatre; but for the larger portion of the play it seems evident he must have relied on his notes and memory only, and have clothed with his own words the bare ideas which he had stolen.'<sup>1</sup>

For evidence that some, at least, of the discrepancies between the texts were due to omissions in the quarto and not to amplifications in the folio, Daniel relied mainly upon two passages. The first of these occurs in sc. iv (I. iv), in which, as he says, 'Dr. Caius's anger against Parson Hugh and his challenge to him is unintelligible in the Q<sup>o</sup> ed., for there no information has been given him that Simple is the parson's messenger.' This argument is unanswerable if we suppose—what may, of course, be denied—that the author wrote with reasonable care. The second passage occurs in the dialogue between Falstaff and Simple in sc. xvi (IV. v. 25, &c.). Here a solid block of nine speeches is absent from the quarto in the

<sup>1</sup> Daniel then alludes to the fact that Busby, who must have obtained the copy for the *Merry Wives*, had been previously responsible for the surreptitious quarto of *Henry V*, and proceeds: 'To which I would add that for the *Merry Wives* he possibly employed the same note-taker who supplied him with "copy" for the *Henry V*. There is a little peculiarity common to both these quartos which would seem to point to this conclusion. *Shure* for *sure*, *shute* and *shout* for *suit*, *worell* for *world*, occur in both. . . . It must not, however, be forgotten that both these quartos came from the press of T. Creed, and therefore it might be that *for* these peculiarities, which I attribute to the note-taker, the printer alone was responsible.' This is extremely ingenious.



middle of an otherwise well-reported scene. Daniel argued that the omission of these speeches made Simple's subsequent remarks absurd, but our view of the question must depend upon the limits we set to Simple's imbecility (see note to l. 1333). Both passages seem to me to be strong arguments in favour of the quarto being corrupt, while falling short of actual proof.<sup>1</sup> Yet stronger evidence is, to my mind, supplied by minor indications such as that pointed out at l. 925. But after all the most conclusive reason for mistrusting the quarto tradition is the fact that the text there presented can, even without the help of the other version, be shown to be so garbled and corrupted that it is obviously impossible to set any limits to its possible mutilation.

It will be observed that all Daniel sought to establish was the fact of omissions in the quarto text. He made no attempt to distinguish between those due to bad reporting and those for which a stage adapter might be responsible. His view, moreover, by no means precludes the possibility of the original having been revised between the appearance of the quarto and folio editions.

Hart has some interesting remarks on the subject of the two texts, especially as to the different fates of various individual rôles. It does not appear, however, that he realized the importance of his own observations on this point; while he attempted no detailed analysis. On the general question he writes as follows (p. xiii): 'I believe there was a recognised and authorised shortened representation of the play in use, reduced from our Folio version, for special purposes, whether to convenience a smaller company, or for private representation, as, for example,

<sup>1</sup> Daniel also sought to show that certain passages which occupy different positions in the two texts could be shown to be misplaced in the quarto. His arguments appear to me defective (see notes to ll. 81-6, sc. xi, ll. 1437-8). A stronger case can be made out for certain minor transpositions (see for instance ll. 875, 1140).

for compression into reduced time after court revels or banquets. In order to effect this, certain blocks of the play would be omitted, but lines or pieces of these blocks would be retained in order to preserve the continuity of narrative and action. Possibly the shortened play was the one the public were more familiar with, which rendered the task of the surreptitious note-taker and purloiner the easier.' It should be mentioned that this view was evolved by Hart to explain (in the manner previously set forth and questioned) the difficulties of the folio text, and was only later applied to the quarto.

It appears, therefore, that in studying the variations of the texts preserved in the quarto and the folio respectively we have constantly to bear in mind three possible operations: (i) the garbling, by a *reporter*, of the play as actually performed on the stage; (ii) the cutting and possible rewriting of the text for acting purposes by a stage *adapter*; and (iii) the working over, by an authorized *reviser*, of the original text (underlying the quarto) and the production of a new version (substantially represented by the folio text).

In the following pages I propose to attempt what I imagine to be the first quasi-quantitative analysis of the respective responsibility of these three hypothetical persons—reporter, adapter, and reviser—for the divergencies of the extant texts.

First let us consider the reporter. Of his presence there can be no manner of doubt. For it must be borne in mind that, however the original version of the play may have differed from that preserved in the folio, there is no suggestion of its having been by another hand than Shakespeare's, and it may fairly be asked how many speeches there are which could be ascribed to him in the form in which they appear in the quarto. The most cursory examination of the text shows that there is everywhere gross corruption, constant mutilation, meaningless inversion and clumsy transposition. It is unnecessary



necessary to single out any particular instance from the scores which will be found mentioned in the notes, while no one familiar with the Elizabethan drama from the textual side can possibly mistake their significance. The playhouse thief reveals himself in every scene, corrupting, mutilating, rewriting. The extent of his labours, on the other hand, is difficult to determine, nor shall I endeavour to establish it directly. What I propose to do is to examine carefully all those passages which seem at first sight to point to the presence of his rivals, the adapter and reviser, and to consider whether, and if so to what extent, their agency can be established. If the inquiry fails to elicit evidence of their existence, then the responsibility for the variations of our texts will have to rest wholly upon the broad shoulders of the reporter; while even if their presence is established, it may be possible to set some fairly clear bounds to their activity, and so indirectly define the burden of the reporter.

Before, however, leaving our first friend a few words may be said as to the method by which he obtained the copy. Daniel credits him with a knowledge of shorthand and the use of a notebook. That some playhouse pirates relied on these devices seems to be established by the complaints of Thomas Heywood familiar to all students of Elizabethan or rather Stuart drama. In the present case there seems nothing to suggest that the reporter relied as a rule on anything but his unaided memory. Supposing the version performed on the stage in 1601 to have been in substantial agreement with the extant folio text, a very few visits to the theatre would have enabled a pirate of even moderate parts or experience to vamp up such a text as the quarto in general supplies.<sup>1</sup> In making this assertion I am not speaking

<sup>1</sup> Of course, if there was any extensive revision of the text between quarto and folio, the former, though still demonstrably corrupt, without

without book, for I have tried the experiment myself. It happened that after four visits to *John Bull's Other Island* I was called upon to give some account of the piece for strictly private entertainment, and I found that I was able to reproduce all the material parts of the dialogue sufficiently accurately to convey an idea of the play which was not seriously modified by subsequent reading. I do not pretend that my impromptu version approached verbal accuracy; while there were certain portions for which I relied on narrative summary. Had occasion demanded, however, I could easily have thrown these into doubtless very inferior dialogue, and I am fairly confident that the total result would have approximated to the subsequently published play not less closely—I hope a good deal more closely—than the quarto of the *Merry Wives* does to the folio text. After I had seen the play five or six times I tried the further experiment of writing out from memory the passage of Act IV from the departure of Barney Doran and his gang to the exit of Aunt Judy (pp. 86–92 of the printed text). I had paid no special attention to this scene, but merely selected it as being a clearly defined episode which had struck my fancy on the stage. I still possess this reconstruction of mine and have since collated it with the printed text. I think it will compare favourably with any scene of the quarto which can reasonably be paralleled with it in extent. *John Bull's Other Island* is considerably longer than the full text of the *Merry Wives*, and I had no previous experience whatever in the art of dramatic piracy. On the other hand I must admit that interest is a powerful agent in impressing dialogue on the memory, and I can hardly imagine any one being as intensely interested by the *Merry Wives*

may represent its original much more closely than we are aware, and in that event the case in favour of a stenographic copy would be strengthened.



as I was by my first introduction to the work of the most dazzling of our modern playwrights.

We next come to the stage adapter. His chief *raison d'être* would, of course, be to shorten the text upon which he was at work. This would be done chiefly by excision, but might necessitate the transference to other places of essential lines from the excised portions, and even to some extent the remodelling of the scenes retained. Any substantial omission is, of course, presumptive evidence of the adapter's presence, but we have I think no right to ascribe to him any transposition not clearly necessary for the intelligence of the action, or at least prompted by some evident and urgent motive. Thus we shall hesitate to ascribe to him the omission even of whole scenes if we find fragments of those scenes embedded in the dialogue elsewhere, unless it can be shown that the retention of those fragments was necessary to render the action clear and that their place in the quarto may therefore be equally assigned to the adapter, or else, as an alternative, that their place in the folio can reasonably be ascribed to the reviser.<sup>1</sup> I proceed to examine the evidence in detail, premising only that from the nature of the case it is impossible to offer definite proof that any particular part of the folio text did *not* appear in the version from which the quarto is derived.

The first scene may have been more or less drastically cut for the stage, for all the discussion between third parties concerning Anne and Slender is omitted in the

<sup>1</sup> One possible suggestion with regard to these transpositions may be mentioned, only, I think, to be dismissed. It might be argued that they were due to actors familiar with the full text having introduced fragments from omitted scenes into the shortened version. But this would only be likely to occur if the actors were more used to the full version, and reserved the shortened version for provincial acting or for special entertainments. But the fact that the surreptitious quarto is, *ex hypothesi*, based on the shortened version makes it pretty certain that it was this that held the London stage.

quarto,

quarto, the implication being that negotiations for the match have already taken place. The personal matters relative to the 'dozen white louses' are also absent. Since, however, we later find the reporter giving us conversations which are only implied in the folio text (scs. xii and xiii), we cannot regard the reconstruction of the present scene as beyond his power. Such shortening was an obvious device if his memory were uncertain, while the fact that he is here undoubtedly working with more care than subsequently would account for the traces of his mutilations being comparatively well concealed. When, on turning to sc. ii, we find embedded in the quarto text a fragment which evidently belongs to one of the omitted portions of sc. i, it becomes clear that the acting version was at any rate fuller than the quarto text, and, therefore, that we cannot legitimately invoke the stage adapter to account for any of the deficiencies of the latter.

In sc. iv the Fenton portion is bodily omitted. This looks like adaptation, but it should be borne in mind that though it is right that Fenton should be introduced to the audience as early as possible, nothing passes in this scene of any importance for the plot. Unless, therefore, the reporter happened to recall the dialogue in detail he would have no clue whatever by which to reconstruct it. All that can be said is that we are under no necessity of calling in the stage adapter.

If Robin, Falstaff's boy, had a part on the stage in scs. vi, ix, and x (the three in which he appears in the folio text), I can imagine no reason why the reporter should consistently avoid favouring us with any of his speeches. He, of course, appears on the scene in the quarto, but it is as a mere super. The reason for suppressing the part on the stage would be obvious, and I think that here if anywhere we may see the hand of the adapter.

In sc. xi, supposing the quarto to represent a clumsy attempt



attempt at mending the confused time-data of the original, there seems no means of telling whether the effort was due to the adapter or the reporter. The omission of the scene which begins the fourth act in the folio text is no loss to the play, and as it gets rid of one character—a boy moreover—it may well have been due to stage requirements.

In sc. xiii—as indeed on the occasion of Falstaff's former visit in sc. x—it is just possible that certain alterations were made for the sake of stage effect, though if the adapter was responsible he was guilty of one bad blunder. Fragments of omitted passages also occur elsewhere, and on the whole the reporter must be held solely responsible.

In sc. xv the texts differ rather fundamentally, and since, as we shall shortly see, there is reason to suppose that some revision has taken place, no basis remains for the discussion of stage adaptation.

The first four scenes of the fifth act of the folio version have nothing corresponding in the quarto. Since, however, the opening words of V. i are preserved in the quarto at the beginning of sc. xviii (= V. v) these four scenes cannot have been altogether omitted in the acting version. Moreover the quarto retains Ford's announcement that he intends paying Falstaff another visit (l. 1260), which he realizes in V. i, and also Slender's subsequent reference to the 'mum budget' countersign arranged in V. ii. These considerations tend to show that it was the reporter rather than the adapter who was responsible for the omission. The rapid succession of short scenes would be difficult to remember accurately, and the reporter was moreover growing very tired of his task.

In sc. xviii itself there are evidently some passages which go back to an original different from the folio and which might therefore be due to an adapter. In view, however, of the state to which the quarto text has been here reduced by the reporter, and of the practical certainty

tainty of revision, it would be waste of time to consider the possible presence of other agencies as well.

In summing up I should like to remark that the further I went in my analysis of the text the more I was struck with the extent of the alterations and omissions which apparently had to be assigned to the reporter, while the repeated occurrence of cases, in which omissions at first sight obviously referrable to the adapter had on further investigation to be denied him, ended by making me very sceptical as to his supposed activity. It seems to me, in reviewing the evidence, highly probable that the portions of the play involving parts for Robin and William (that is parts of scs. vi, ix, and x and the whole of IV.i) were cut in the stage version. It is also possible that other passages, notably in scs. i and iv and V. i-iv, may have been excised, but in the present state of the discussion we should not be justified in assuming it to have been so. The idea that the play was seriously altered or shortened is unsupported by evidence.

The general tendency of a reviser, working over a more or less imperfect draft with a view to producing a satisfactory play, would obviously be towards lengthening the text. The limits which it is possible to set to his activity are necessarily vague, and in many cases it must obviously be impossible to distinguish between corruption on the one hand and revision on the other, but I do not think we should be right to credit him with the transposition, for instance, of isolated speeches or blocks of dialogue unless some more or less clear motive for the change is apparent. The evidence for revision is necessarily subtler and more minute than that for adaptation, but some attempt must nevertheless be made to review it in this place.

Sc. i. Here the indication of revision is the occurrence in the quarto of three possibly genuine passages which do not appear in the folio text. Lines 44-6 may quite well have been accidentally omitted from the folio, for  
there



there seems no conceivable reason why a reviser should strike them out, but they may equally owe their existence to the reporter having sought to simplify the scene by inserting a specific statement of what we are left to gather incidentally from the dialogue of the fuller text. In the case of ll. 109-10 I believe the folio text to be corrupt, in that after 'prunes' there have been omitted some words which the reporter rendered by 'and I with my ward Defending my head he hot my shin'. How nearly these words are correct it is, of course, impossible to say. Lastly we have ll. 70-1 which I find it difficult to regard as an invention of the reporter. If they are genuine there must have been substantial alteration at this point, for the words will not fit into the folio text as it now stands. It is possible, however, that they may have been introduced by an actor and have borne some personal or topical significance which gave them greater pertinence than they now appear to possess. The evidence of revision in this scene is on the whole weak.

Sc. ii. The bearing of ll. 129-30, which in the folio belong to I. i, has already been discussed. The suggestion that the present can have been their original position and that they were moved back on revision must be dismissed, since no motive for the change is apparent.

Sc. iii. At ll. 162-3 occurs an alternative reading which Hart apparently thought genuine, a view which would imply revision. I ascribe it to the reporter.

Sc. iv. There is one curious hint of revision in this scene. The apartment which is throughout referred to as the 'counting-house' in the quarto, is in the folio equally consistently called the 'closset'. It is difficult to account for this. A counting house, though suitable enough in the house of a London merchant, is inappropriate in that of a Windsor physician. It is hard to ascribe the absurdity either to the author or to the reporter.

Sc. v. The transposition noted at l. 439 might be regarded as evidence of revision could any motive be suggested. So might the fact that the closing passage appears as dialogue in the quarto and as monologue in the folio, did not the reporter show himself capable of at least as serious modifications elsewhere. What is certain is that in this and subsequent scenes the name Brook has been consistently altered in revision to Broom.

Sc. vi. We here come to what is, except this alteration of name, the only serious piece of evidence in favour of a revision between the originals of the quarto and folio texts that I have been able to discover. The upshot of the discussion on Pistol's remark: 'I will retort the sum in equipage', is that we have to choose between supposing the coincidence of partially overlapping mutilations in both texts, or of revision in the folio by the author himself. I cannot regard the former alternative as satisfactory. Another instance of revision is temptingly suggested by Hart in connexion with Pistol's exit (see l. 537), but he appears to have overlooked one serious objection.

Sc. vii. It is just possible to see revision in a variant reading at l. 696, but it is obviously of no evidential value. The same remark applies to l. 778 in sc. viii.

Sc. ix. Here, as I assume, confusion existed in the time-data of the original, and these have been intentionally modified either in the quarto or the folio. Since crediting the alteration to the reviser means supposing that while seeking to mend matters he really made them worse, it will seem preferable to lay the responsibility on the reporter, a conclusion to be supported on other grounds as well.

Sc. xv. The evidence here is perplexing and rather vague. The texts differ very considerably, and in some passages it is difficult to ascribe the variations to the reporter. I have suggested in the notes that the quarto represents the original text (more or less corrupted of course)



course) after certain passages had been excised, while the folio represents the same original not only cut but partly rewritten by another hand.

Sc. xvi. To account for the very peculiar state of things observable here I have been forced to suppose that the text of so much of this scene as related to the horse-stealing episode had been bodily cut out of the play, and the present substitute inserted, before the copy for the quarto was obtained; that the two texts therefore go back to a common unoriginal source, and further that the substituted passage was badly mauled by the actors.

Sc. xvii. Here again the texts go back to a common source, which, however, there is reason to believe does not represent the original intention of the author.

Sc. xviii. Here the texts undoubtedly go back to different originals, though in the corrupt state of the quarto the extent of the divergence must remain matter of conjecture. The evidence would point to revision in the folio were it possible to regard the quarto as presenting, in however mutilated a form, Shakespeare's own ending of the play. That unfortunately seems out of the question. Neither the quarto nor the folio version can be accepted as original. What appears to have happened is that after the original text had suffered severe mutilation by the excision of a portion of the plot, the remainder was twice worked over, independently though possibly by the same hand, once for popular (quarto), and once for court (folio), representation. It was no doubt on the occasion of this revision that a piece of actor's gag crept into the folio text (see under l. 1484).

The problem before us resolves itself therefore into two: the question of a revision intermediate between the quarto and folio texts, evidence of which must be sought in scs. i-xiv; and the question of a revision of the original affecting both the quarto and folio versions,  
evidence

evidence of which is mainly confined to the last four scenes. With regard to the first question there is one solitary instance in which revision by the author may be accepted as reasonably probable, and a few others in which it is possible, though more or less unlikely. One name has also been consistently altered throughout. Thus the result of our examination is emphatically to discountenance the view that the differences between the texts could to any appreciable extent be due to this cause. With regard to the second point, there can, I think, be little doubt that the play has not come down to us in its original shape, but in a revision probably shortly antedating the appearance of the first quarto. I conjecture that as regards sc. xv the quarto represents a merely mutilated stage version and the folio a refashioned text, that in scs. xvi and xvii both texts go back to an altered original, and that of sc. xviii, lastly, we possess in the quarto and folio texts two differently remodelled versions. I should add, finally, that at some period, possibly not till the text was prepared for press in 1623, many of the oaths, which appear in the quarto, and were no doubt for the most part present in the original, were omitted or toned down in accordance with the Jacobean statute against profanity. A comparative list of the oaths found in the two versions is given at the end of this introduction (Appendix II).

Before summing up what I believe to have been the textual history of the *Merry Wives* there is one other question I should like to raise. Who can he have been who was responsible for the compilation of the quarto text, the person whom we have hitherto spoken of as the reporter?

This person has repeatedly been credited with some source of information beside his own memory. I have already expressed my own view that the supposition of neither shorthand nor longhand notes is necessary to account for the text as we have it. The very best passages



passages of the quarto are easily within the reach of an even inexperienced pirate relying on memory alone. On the other hand it must be admitted that the fidelity, with which in different scenes the quarto reproduces what we conjecture to have been its original, varies in a decidedly perplexing manner. Daniel threw out the suggestion that the reporter may have enjoyed the personal assistance of some of the actors, or else possibly have had access to their written parts. Now if any actor in the *Merry Wives* played the knave after this fashion, there can be no question whatever as to which it was. In the course of an interesting analysis of the quarto text Hart wrote as follows (p. xx): 'the Host in the Quarto receives his full allowance of space. He is but slightly curtailed in any place from his proper position in the Folio, so that he is even more in evidence, comparatively, in the Quarto. He was undoubtedly a popular character.' This account of the matter, however, does but scant justice to the very unusual accuracy with which the part of mine Host is reported. If we except a few well-defined passages, where we have reason to suspect that the circumstances were peculiar, we find speech after speech of this single character reported with almost verbal accuracy, while in the case of any other character we may select we find, by the side of passages which appear tolerably correct, others which are corrupted, perverted or cut.

Will Daniel's hypothesis account for this? Let us suppose that the reporter bribed mine Host to lend him the manuscript of his part. He must have obtained it either before he wrote his version and used it as the basis thereof, or after and used it for correction. If the former, why are there even in this part frequent small verbal discrepancies of a nature too slight and unmeaning to be accounted for by subsequent revision? If the latter, why do these small discrepancies appear in some speeches and not in others? These objections might be met

met by supposing that instead of relying on a written part the reporter obtained the verbal assistance of an actor who was not very perfect in his rôle. This, however, fails to account for another remarkable phenomenon observable in the quarto, namely the comparative excellence of the reporting of those scenes in which the Host is on the stage even where he takes no prominent part in the conversation. To illustrate this let us briefly review the scenes in question.

Mine Host appears in eight scenes of the folio text, and all these are preserved in the quarto likewise. He first enters in sc. iii, though he only remains on the stage quite a short while. The whole scene is well reported, in spite of a few minor corruptions. None of these, however, occur while the Host is on the stage, the texts of that part being in all but literal agreement. He next appears towards the end of sc. v, and the quarto text, which has so far been much compressed, suddenly becomes almost parallel to that of the folio, though it is true that some transposition occurs. The Host's own part is small and his speeches are almost verbally reported. In sc. vii the short portion before the Host's entry is much mangled in the quarto text, which improves greatly from that point on. His own speeches are practically word for word the same in the two versions, while those of the other characters, though they correspond substantially, present constant verbal differences. Three corruptions in the Host's part deserve notice. He wrongly directs Page and the rest to go 'ouer the fields' (l. 682) instead of 'through the town': this is a slip on somebody's part. He promises the Doctor that he shall 'wear' (l. 696) instead of 'woo' Anne Page—the coarsened substitute of a careless actor. Lastly he calls Caius 'bullies taile' (l. 661) instead of 'bullie stale', which, if not a mere misprint, is one of those strange oral perversions of the type of the famous 'child she-bear'. The next scene (viii) is very similar. The opening  
differs



differs widely in the two texts. Agreement begins with the entrance of Page, &c., and continues after the appearance of the Host and Caius. When Caius and Evans are left alone at the close the agreement ceases. The Host's own part which is slight is more exactly rendered in the quarto than the rest, though by an oversight of the printer a portion of one of his speeches is assigned to Shallow. His only speech of any length presents two variations from the folio, in one of which it is manifestly correct and is followed by all modern editors, while in the other it almost certainly preserves the stage version. The Host is again on the stage for the latter half of III. ii of the folio text—for practically the whole of the corresponding scene (ix) in the quarto. Here the quarto is considerably corrupt, but the Host's own part is of the slightest and the only two speeches assigned to him are substantially correct. He does not reappear till the short scene numbered xiv. The texts are in substantial agreement, the variations observable in his own speeches being as moderate as one would expect from a rather careless actor. In sc. xvi the Host's portion falls into two parts. In that with Simple the quarto gives a very accurate text so far as it goes, though it has a serious omission at one point where the Host takes but a small part in the dialogue. The horse-stealing portion on the contrary is very corrupt both in the Host's speeches and others. I have elsewhere conjectured that this was a late insertion which the actors had not properly learned. The Host puts in a final appearance in sc. xvii where the quarto again offers a bad text. The reason is probably the same as in the case of the horse-stealing episode, but the Host's own speeches, which are few and short, are in the main correct. His last speech consists of the only two lines in the scene which are verbally identical in the two texts. Fenton's speeches are merely paraphrased in the quarto.

Now

Now, if this record be compared with that of any other character in the play, I think that it will be admitted to be somewhat remarkable. There are, of course, other portions of the text in which a close correspondence exists between the quarto and folio texts, closer, indeed, than that of some of the Host scenes. Particularly is this the case with certain portions of Falstaff's dialogues: the two Brook-scenes will serve as good examples. Falstaff, however, is the central character of the piece and some reasonably sufficient reproduction of his part was a *sine qua non* of any pirated edition. There is, moreover, no sort of consistency in the treatment of his part. In one passage it will be reported with more or less verbal fidelity, in another it will be mutilated, transposed, or altogether omitted. What makes the case of mine Host remarkable is the consistency with which, if we omit two scenes which are open to suspicion, his part is faithfully reproduced, and as a rule the greater accuracy of the parts of other actors while he is on the stage.

The theory I am going to put forward will, doubtless, have already suggested itself to the reader. It is simply that the pirate who procured the copy for Busby was none other than the actor of the Host's part. We have seen that to suppose that he merely supplied his own part to the reporter will not meet the facts of the case. On the other hand I think that they will be exactly accounted for by supposing that the version was compiled by an actor who had learned his part imperfectly and very likely by ear. How word-perfect Elizabethan actors commonly were we can hardly hope to know after the lapse of three centuries, but two facts should be borne in mind. One is that authors frequently complain of unwarranted alterations and gag; the other that there were no consecutive runs to fix the dialogue in the minds of the actors. It is, therefore, a legitimate surmise that the latter were far from perfect in their parts,



parts, but that they were quick at substituting a passable makeshift if the actual words of the author eluded their memory. We need not, then, be surprised to find an actor, if he sits down to write out his part, making various small alterations of which the author might disapprove. He would naturally pick up a good deal of the other actors' parts from hearing them on the stage and would, of course, tend to remember those most accurately which were most intimately interwoven with his own. But this is precisely the state of things which exists in the quarto. Not only do we find the Host's part alone usually in more or less verbal agreement in the two versions, not only do we as a rule find the versions springing into substantial agreement when he enters and relapsing into paraphrase when he quits the stage, but when he disappears for good and all at the end of the fourth act (and the actor very likely went home or to the tavern) we find what remains of the play in a more miserably garbled condition than any previous portion.

It may be, of course, that the actor did not himself write out the copy, but dictated it to some devil in Busby's office; it may even be that the version was concocted in collaboration by the actor and a reporter. But that mine Host had a main finger in the work I feel convinced, and I see no justification for conjecturing two agents where one will suffice.

In order to make the relation of the texts as clear as possible in detail I print, as an appendix to this introduction, parallel texts of sc. xvi (IV. v). This scene is of the greatest importance for the criticism of the text, and also illustrates in a general way the peculiarities of the Host's part. Had I wished to make out as strong a case as possible for my views on this latter point I should, indeed, have selected a different scene, but the importance of the one here given from a general critical point of view necessarily overruled any such consideration.

By way of epilogue I should like to summarize in narrative form what I imagine to have been the textual history of our play. Somewhere about 1598 Shakespeare, perhaps at the instigation of Queen Elizabeth, perhaps not, wrote the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The play as it came from his pen, and as presumably acted on the stage, was substantially as we know it, except that the plot by which the Host of the Garter is cozened of his horses occupied a far more prominent place than now in the later portion, and was intimately interwoven with the *dénouement* of the last act. For the purposes of representation a few unimportant excisions were made in the original text. After a while, and for some reason which I do not attempt to explain, it became necessary or desirable to modify and largely to remove this horse-stealing plot. The work was handed over to one of the playwrights connected with the Lord Chamberlain's company with instructions. He made the necessary excisions and worked over the remainder so as to conceal any too obvious traces of the knife. The last act was probably wholly recast, and following his instructions, he supplied two alternative versions thereof, one adapted for representation at court, the other on the common stage, but differing as it chanced more than was absolutely necessary for the end in view. These alterations were clumsily applied to the stage version. The new popular fifth act was substituted for the original, and in other parts where necessary the altered version was introduced. But the actors were lazy and made but a very poor attempt to learn the new dialogue, while wherever possible they contented themselves with mere omissions, ignoring the new material altogether. They possibly felt some resentment at the interference which threw extra work on their shoulders, and introduced bits of gag containing sly allusions to forbidden matter. The play had caused some talk, possibly scandal, and an enterprising but unscrupulous stationer



stationer scented an opportunity. The company was not improbably in disgrace and absent from London at the time. One of the hired actors, however, who had filled a not unimportant rôle in the play remained behind, and proved amenable. He produced, as the result of a week or two's labour with a not very ready pen, a rough reconstruction of the play, in which, naturally enough, his own part of the Host was the only one rendered throughout with tolerable accuracy. Of the recent insertions, however, he had little recollection even so far as his own speeches were concerned. The quarto appeared before Elizabeth's reign closed, and possibly sold. The Chamberlain's men returned to London and prosperity as His Majesty's players. Whether they re-engaged that same knavish Host of the Garter we are uninformed. Anyway Busby's wretched piracy could do them little harm so long as they had the authentic original in their possession. This had recently undergone further alteration by the change of the name Brook to Broom, presumably on personal grounds. One day the author was turning over the leaves of this original at the playhouse. He perhaps pulled a wry face over the patchwork of the closing portion, but forbore to touch it. Looking at the more original earlier scenes, however, a phrase here and there caught his eye that suggested improvement. He wrote a few corrections at random and laid the book aside again. Years passed: the author retired to his native Warwickshire and quietly died. In 1619, as part of an altogether rather shady enterprise, the surreptitious quarto of 1602 was reprinted. A year or two later an authoritative edition of all the available comedies, histories, and tragedies of the author was undertaken, with the goodwill of the company, by a syndicate of London stationers. The playhouse copy of the *Merry Wives* was obtained, transcribed, and prepared for press with such care as the circumstances seemed to demand. In particular many expressions

expressions were modified that seemed obnoxious to the statute against profanity. In 1623 the play appeared in the collected folio as the third of the comedies, and the authorized playhouse version for the first time saw the light, with no more errors than the editorial and typographical methods of the time might lead us to expect. Would there were some chance of recovering the play as Shakespeare wrote it.

Since the scene-division of the quarto text is not marked in the reprint, I here insert a table showing the lines comprised in each scene, together with the corresponding division of the folio text. The division is, of course, the same as that indicated in the notes.

Scene	lines	Folio
i	1-120	I. i
ii	121-133	ii
iii	134-237	iii
iv	238-310	iv
v	311-464	II. i
vi	465-643	ii
vii	644-705	iii
viii	706-786	III. i
ix	787-827	ii
x	828-951	iii
xi	952-1067	v
xii	1068-1139	iv
xiii	1140-1231	IV. ii
xiv	1232-1242	iii
xv	1243-1300	iv
xvi	1301-1397	v
xvii	1398-1435	vi
xviii	1436-1624	V. v



## APPENDIX I.

In printing these parallel specimens of the horse-stealing scene I have disregarded the line divisions of both texts and consequently the capitalisation of the quarto where it gives the speeches as verse. Line numbers have, however, been inserted, in the quarto according to the present reprint, in the folio according to the Globe edition. A few typographical errors have been corrected within brackets.

---

*Quarto 1602.*

---

[Scene xvi.]

*Enter Host and Simple.*

1301

*Host.* What would thou haue boore, what thick-skin?  
Speake, breath, discus, short, quick, briefe, snap.

*Sim.* Sir, I am sent fro my M. to sir *John Falstaffe*.

*Host.* Sir *John*, theres his Castle, his standing bed, 1305  
his trundle bed, his chamber is painted about with the  
story of the prodigall, fresh and new, go knock,  
hee le speak like an Antripophiginian to thee: Knock  
I say.

*Sim.* Sir I should speak with an old woman that went vp 1310  
into his chamber.

*Host.* An old woman, the knight may be robbed, Ile  
call bully knight, bully sir *John*. Speake from thy Lungs  
military: it is thine host, thy Ephesian calls.

*Fal.* Now mine Host.

1315

*Host:* Here is a Bohemian tarter bully, tarries the comming  
downe of the fat woman: Let her descēd bully, let her  
descend, my chambers are honorable, pah priuasie, fie.

*Fal.* Indeed mine host there was [a fat] woman with 1320  
me, but she is gone.

*Enter Sir John.*

*Sim.* Pray sir was it not the wise woman of *Brainford*?

*Fal.* Marry was it *Musselshell*, what would you?

1325

*Sim.* Marry sir my maister *Slender* sent me to her,  
to know whether one *Nim*

that hath his chaine, cousoned him of it, or no.



---

*Folio 1623.*

---

[*Actus Quartus.*] *Scena Quinta.*

---

*Enter Host, Simple, Falstaffe, Bardolfe, Euans,  
Caius, Quickly.*

*Host.* What wouldst thou haue? (Boore) what? (thick skin)  
speake, breathe, discusse: breefe, short, quicke, snap.

*Simp.* Marry Sir, I come to speake with Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*  
5 from M. *Slender*.

*Host.* There's his Chamber, his House, his Castle, his  
standing-bed and truckle-bed: 'tis painted about with the  
story of the Prodigall, fresh and new: go, knock and call:  
10 hee'l speake like an Anthropophaginian vnto thee: Knocke  
I say.

*Simp.* There's an olde woman, a fat woman gone vp into  
his chamber: Ile be so bold as stay Sir till she come downe:  
15 I come to speake with her indeed.

*Host.* Ha? A fat woman? The Knight may be robb'd: Ile  
call. Bully-Knight, Bully Sir *Iohn*: speake from thy Lungs  
Military: Art thou there? It is thine Host, thine Ephesian calcs.

20 *Fal.* How now, mine Host?

*Host.* Here's a Bohemian-Tartar taries the comming  
downe of thy fat-woman: Let her descend (Bully) let her  
descend: my Chambers are honourable: Fie, priuacy? Fie.

25 *Fal.* There was (mine Host) an old-fat-woman euen now with  
me, but she's gone.

*Simp.* Pray you Sir, was't not the Wise-woman of *Brainford*?

30 *Fal.* I marry was it (Mussel-shell) what would you with her?

*Simp.* My Master (Sir) my master *Slender*, sent to her seeing  
her go thorough the streets, to know (Sir) whether one *Nim*  
(Sir) that beguil'd him of a chaine, had the chaine, or no.

*Fal.* I talked with the woman about it.

*Sim.* And I pray sir what ses she?

*Fal.* Marry she ses the very same man that beguiled  
maister *Slender* of his chaine, cousoned him of it.

1330

*Sim.* May I be bolde to tell my maister so sir?

*Fal.* I tike, who more bolde.

1335

*Sim.* I thanke you sir, I shall make my maister a glad man  
at these tydings, God be with you sir.

*Host.* Thou art clarkly sir *Iohn*, thou art clarkly, was  
there a wise woman with thee?

*Fal.* Marry was there mine host, one that taught me  
more wit then I learned this 7. yeare, and I paid  
nothing for it, but was paid for my learning.

1340

*Enter Bardolfe.*

*Bar.* O Lord sir cousonage, plaine cousonage.

1345

*Host.* Why man, where be my horses? where be the  
Germanes?

*Bar.* Rid away with your horses: after I came  
beyond Maidenhead, they flung me  
in a slow of myre, & away they ran.

1350

\* [In the quarto the Doctor's entry precedes that of Sir Hugh.]

*Enter Sir Hugh.*

1360

*Sir Hu.* Where is mine Host of the gartyr?

Now my Host, I would desire you looke you now,  
to haue a care of your entertainments,



35 *Fal.* I spake with the old woman about it.

*Sim.* And what says she, I pray Sir?

*Fal.* Marry shee sayes, that the very same man that beguild Master *Slender* of his Chaine, cozon'd him of it.

40 *Simp.* I would I could haue spoken with the Woman her selfe, I had other things to haue spoken with her too, from him.

*Fal.* What are they? let vs know.

*Host.* I: come: quicke.

45 [*Sim.*] I may not conceale them (Sir.)

*Host.* Conceale them, or thou di'st.

*Sim.* Why sir, they were nothing but about Mistris *Anne Page*, to know if it were my Masters fortune to haue her, or no.

50 *Fal.* 'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

*Sim.* What Sir?

*Fal.* To haue her, or no: goe; say the woman told me so.

*Sim.* May I be bold to say so Sir?

55 *Fal.* I Sir: like who more bold.

*Sim.* I thanke your worship: I shall make my Master glad with these tydings.

*Host.* Thou [art] clearkly: thou art clearkly (Sir *Iohn*) was there a wise woman with thee?

60 *Fal.* I that there was (mine *Host*) one that hath taught me more wit, then euer I learn'd before in my life: and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

*Bar.* Out alas (Sir) cozonage: meere cozonage.

65 *Host.* Where be my horses? speake well of them varletto.

*Bar.* Run away with the cozoners: for so soone as I came beyond *Eaton*, they threw me off, from behinde one of them, 70 in a slough of myre; and set spurres, and away; like three *Germane*-diuels; three *Doctor Faustasses*.

*Host.* They are gone but to meete the Duke (villaine) doe not say they be fled: *Germanes* are honest men.

75 *Euan.* Where is mine *Host*?

*Host.* What is the matter Sir?

*Euan.* Haue a care of your entertainments: there is a

for there is three sorts of cosen  
garmombles, is cosen all the Host of Maidenhead & Readings, 1365

now you are an honest man, and a scurvy beggerly  
lowsie knaue beside : and can point wrong places,  
I tell you for good will,

grate why mine Host.

*Exit.* 1369

*Enter Doctor.*

1351

*Doc.* Where be my Host de gartyre ?

*Host.* O here sir in perplexitie.

*Doc.* I cannot tell vad be dad,

but begar I will tell you van ting, dear be a Garmaine Duke 1355  
[come] to de Court, has cosened all de host of *Branford*, and  
*Redding* : begar I tell you for good will, ha, ha, mine Host, am  
I euen met you ?

*Exit.* 1359

*Host.* I am cosened *Hugh*, and coy *Bardolfe*,  
sweet knight assist me, I am cosened.

1370

*Exit.*

*Fal.* Would all the worell were cosened for me, for I am  
cousoned and beaten too.

1373

from { [Well, and the fine wits of the Court heare this, 1546  
sc. xviii { Thayle so whip me with their keene Iests,  
That thayle melt me out like tallow,  
Drop by drop out of my grease.] 1549

Well, I neuer prospered since I forswore 1374  
my selfe at *Primero* : and my winde were but long inough  
to say my prayers, Ide repent, now from whence come you ?

*Enter Mistresse Quickly.*

*Quic.* From the two parties forsooth.

*Fal.* The diuell take the one partie, and his dam the other, 1380  
and theyle be both bestowed. I haue endured more for  
their sakes, than man  
is able to endure.

friend of mine come to Towne, tels mee there is three Cozen-  
 80 Iermans, that has cozend all the *Hosts* of *Readins*, of *Maiden-*  
*head*; of *Cole-brooke*, of horses and money :

I tell you for good will (looke you) you are wise, and full of  
 gibes, and vouting-stocks : and 'tis not conuenient you should  
 be cozoned. Fare you well.

85 *Cai.* Ver'is mine *Host de Iartee*?

*Host.* Here (*Master Doctor*) in perplexitie, and doubtfull  
 delemma.

*Cai.* I cannot tell vat is dat : but it is tell-a-me, dat you  
 make grand preparation for a Duke *de Iamanie* : by my trot :  
 90 der is no Duke that the Court is know, to come :

I tell you for good will : adieu.

*Host.* Huy and cry, (*villaine*) goe :  
 assist me Knight, I am vndone : fly, run : huy, and cry  
 (*villaine*) I am vndone.

95 *Fal.* I would all the world might be cozond, for I haue  
 beene cozond and beaten too :

if it should come to the care of  
 the Court, how I haue beene transformed; and how my  
 transformation hath beene washd, and cudgeld, they would  
 100 melt mee out of my fat drop by drop, and liquor Fishermens-  
 boots with me : I warrant they would whip me with their fine  
 wits, till I were as crest-falne as a dride-peare :

I neuer prosper'd, since I forswore  
 my self at *Primero* : well, if my winde were but long enough  
 105 [ ] ; I would repent : Now? Whence come you?

*Qui.* From the two parties forsooth.

*Fal.* The Diuell take one partie, and his Dam the other :  
 110 and so they shall be both bestowed : I haue suffer'd more for  
 their sakes; more then the villanous inconstancy of mans  
 disposition is able to beare.



*Quic.* O Lord sir, they are the sorowfulst creatures that 1385  
euer liued : specially mistresse *Ford*, her husband hath beaten  
her that she is all blacke and blew poore soule.

*Fal.* What tellest me of blacke and blew, I haue bene 1390  
beaten all the colours in the Rainbow, and in my escape  
like to a bene apprehended for a witch of *Brainford*,

and set in the stockes.

*Quic.* Well sir, she is a sorrowfull woman,  
and I hope when you heare my errant, youle be perswaded 1395  
to the contrarie

*Fal.* Come goe with me into my chamber, Ile heare thee.

*Exit omnes.* 1397

*Qui.* And haue not they suffer'd? Yes, I warrant; speciously  
115 one of them; Mistris *Ford* (good heart) is beaten blacke and  
blew, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

*Fal.* What tell'st thou mee of blacke, and blew? I was  
beaten my selfe into all the colours of the Rainebow: and I  
120 was like to be apprehended for the Witch of *Braine-ford*, but  
that my admirable dexteritie of wit, my counterfeiting the  
action of an old woman deliuer'd me, the knaue Constable  
had set me ith'Stocks, ith' common Stocks, for a Witch.

125 *Qu[.]* Sir: let me speake with you in your Chamber,

you shall heare how things goe, and (I warrant) to your content:  
here is a Letter will say somewhat: (good-hearts) what a-doe  
here is to bring you together? Sure, one of you do's not serue  
130 heauen weil, that you are so cross'd.

*Fal.* Come vp into my Chamber.

---

*Exeunt.*

## APPENDIX II.

A COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE MAIN OATHS  
AND ASSEVERATIONS OCCURRING IN THE  
QUARTO AND FOLIO TEXTS.

(Where an oath has been omitted in either text the word *omitted* is printed in the corresponding column. Where either column is blank the text to which it refers either omits the passage in question altogether or else gives it in a form too divergent for textual comparison.)

*Quarto 1602.*

91 by God  
115 *omitted*  
117 be God (by God 1619)  
175 afore God  
270 For Gods sake  
276 begar  
283 O  
285 O Ieshu  
a deuella, a deuella  
289 Ieshu blesse me  
290 O Lord  
298 O God  
  
323 Ieshu blesse me  
324 a Gods name  
  
333 O God  
341 in the name of God  
355 O Lord  
386 God saue me

*Folio 1623.*

I. i. 28 per-lady  
151 The Teuill and his  
Tam  
191 So got-udge me  
197 Oh heauen  
243 got's Lords, and his  
Ladies  
273 Od's plessed-wil  
  
316 By cocke and pie  
320 *omitted*  
iii. 36 *omitted*  
iv. 38 *omitted*  
  
64 od's-me  
70 *omitted*  
O *Diabie, Diabie*  
  
117 by gar  
  
II. i. 24 with The Deuills  
name  
30 *omitted*  
  
162 *omitted*  
ii. 56 Lord, Lord



- 533 O God  
 562 O Lord  
 642 Gods my life  
 662 Begar  
 674, 679, 690, 697, 699,  
 702 Begar (begar)  
 712 Ieshu ples mee  
 715 so kad vdge me  
 743 *omitted*  
 754 *omitted*  
 757 By Ieshu  
 760 O Ieshu  
 763 So kad vdge me  
 780 Afore God  
 786 begar  
 804 Begar  
 844 By the Lord  
 853 By the Lord  
 868 O Lord  
 883 Gode body (Gods body  
 1619)  
 928 By Ieshu  
 930 God plesse me  
 949 By so kad vdgme (vdge  
 me 1619)  
 962 Sblood

- 116 *omitted*  
 180 *omitted*  
 330 *omitted*  
 iii. 12 By gar  
 32 By gar  
 46 Body-kins  
 64, 71, 86, 94 (*bis*), 100  
 By-gar (by-gar)  
 III. i. 11 'Pless my soule  
 62 Got's-will, and his  
 passion of my  
 heart  
 85 By-gar  
 91 *omitted*  
 93 *Diable*  
 96 As I am a Chris-  
 tians-soule  
 115 Trust me  
 125 By gar  
 126 by gar  
 ii. 19 the dickens  
 65 be-gar  
 iii. 52 Ile speake it before  
 the best Lord  
 65 *omitted*  
 87 heauen knowes  
 119 Pray heauen  
 133 For shame  
 183 By gar  
 226 heauen forgiue my sins  
 227 Be gar  
 238 Be gar  
 257 by gar  
 v. 9 *omitted*

971 By the Lord  
 984 O Lord  
 998 By the masse  
 1020 as God would haue it

1026 By the Lord  
 1030 by the Lord  
 1035 by the Lord  
 1060 godeso

1085 Godes pitie  
 1110 Godeso  
 1121 be God  
 1124 O God

1151 Gods body  
 1157 O God  
 1168 For Gods sake  
 1180 for Gods sake (Gods 1619)  
 1194 Gods my record

1202 By so kad vdge me  
 1219 By Ieshu  
 1289 So kad vdge me  
 1345 O Lord  
 1355 begar  
 1385 O Lord  
 1454 God forgine me

1484 God blesse me  
 1491 God send me  
 1543 By the Lord  
 1568, 1569, 1572 begar  
                   (Begar)

1580 by Gods lyd  
 1582 begod  
 1584 by God  
 1586 so God saue me  
 1591 Ieshu

18 *omitted*  
 40 *omitted*  
 60 Oh  
 84 As good lucke would  
           haue it

90 Yes  
 109 *omitted*  
 119 *omitted*

[II. ii. 313 *omitted*]

III. iv. 12 heauen sospeed me

59 Odd's-hart-lings  
 47 *omitted*  
 32 O

IV. i. 25 od's-Nownes

ii. 11 *omitted*  
 42 *omitted*  
 75 *omitted*

139 Heauen be my wit-  
           nesse

202 By yea, and no  
 iv. 67 *omitted*  
 v. 64 Out alas

113 *omitted*

V. v. 35 Heauen forgine our  
           sinnes

85 Heauens defend me

128 *omitted*  
 217, 219, 220, 222 (*bis*)  
           by gar (bee gar,  
           be gar)

[Merrie Wiues of Windsor]

A





A  
Most pleasaunt and  
excellent conceited Co-  
medie, of Syr *Iohn Falstaffe*, and the  
merrie Wiues of *Windfor*.

Entermixed with fundrie  
variable and pleasing humors, of Syr *Hugh*  
the Welch Knight, Iustice *Shallow*, and his  
wife Cousin M. *Slender*.

With the swaggering vaine of Auncient  
*Pistoll*, and Corporall *Nym*.

By *William Shakespeare*.

As it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honorable  
my Lord Chamberlaines seruants. Both before her  
Maiestie, and else-where.



L O N D O N

Printed by T. C. for Arthur Iohnson, and are to be sold at  
his shop in Powles Church-yard, at the signe of the  
Flower de Leuse and the Crowne.

I 6 0 2.







A pleafant conceited Co-  
medie, of Syr *Iohn Falstaffe*, and the  
merry Wiues of *WVindfor*.

*Enter Iuftice Shallow, Syr Hugh, Maifter Page,  
and Slender.*

*Shal.* N Ere talke to me, Ile make a ftar-cham-  
ber matter of it.

The Councell fhall know it. (mee.

*Pag.* Nay good maifter *Shallow* be perfwaded by

*Slen.* Nay furely my vncle fhall not put it vp fo.

*Sir Hu.* Wil you not heare reafons M. *Slenders*?

You fhould heare reafons.

*Shal.* Tho he be a knight, he fhall not thinke to  
carrie it fo away.

M. *Page* I will not be wronged. For you

Syr, I loue you, and for my coufen

He comes to looke vpon your daughter.

*Pa.* And heres my hand, and if my daughter

Like him fo well as I, wee'l quickly haue it a match :

In the meane time let me intreat you to foiourne

Here a while. And on my life Ile vndertake

To make you friends.

*Sir Hu.* I pray you M. *Shallowes* let it be fo.

A 3

The

*A pleasaunt Comedie, of*

The matter is pud to arbitarments.

The first man is M. *Page*, videlicet M. *Page*.

The second is my selfe, videlicet my selfe. (tyr.

And the third and last man, is mine host of the gar-

*Enter Syr Iohn Falstaffe, Pistoll, Bardolfe,  
and Nim.*

Here is fir *Iohn* himselfe now, looke you.

*Fal.* Now M. *Shallow*, youle complaine of me  
to the Councell, I heare?

*Shal.* Sir *Iohn*, fir *Iohn*, you haue hurt my keeper,  
Kild my dogs, stolne my deere.

*Fal.* But not kissed your keepers daughter.

*Shal.* Well this shall be answered.

*Fal.* Ile answere it strait. I haue done all this.  
This is now answred.

*Shal.* Well, the Councell shall know it.

*Fal.* Twere better for you twere knowne in  
Youle be laught at. (counsell,

*Sir Hu.* Good vrdes fir *Iohn*, good vrdes.

*Fal.* Good vrdes, good Cabidge.

*Slender* I brake your head,

What matter haue you against mee?

*Slen.* I haue matter in my head against you and  
your cogging companions, *Pistoll* and *Nym*. They  
carried mee to the Tauerne and made mee drunke,  
and afterward picked my pocket.

*Fal.* What say you to this *Pistoll*, did you picke  
Maister *Slenders* purse *Pistoll*?

*Slen.* I by this handkercher did he. Two faire  
shouell boord shillings, besides feuen groats in mill  
fixpences.

*Fal.*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Fal.* What say you to this *Pistoll*?

*Pist.* Sir *Iohn*, and Maister mine, I combat craue  
Of this fame laten bilbo. I do retort the lie  
Euen in thy gorge, thy gorge, thy gorge.

*Slen.* By this light it was he then.

*Nym.* Syr my honor is not for many words,  
But if you run bace humors of me,  
I will say mary trap. And there's the humor of it.

*Fal.* You heare these matters denide gentlemẽ,  
You heare it.

*Enter Mistresse Foord, Mistresse Page, and her  
daughter Anne.*

*Pa.* No more now,  
I thinke it be almost dinner time,  
For my wife is come to meet vs.

*Fal.* Mistresse *Foord*, I thinke your name is,  
If I mistake not.

*Syr Iohn* kisses her.

*Mis. Ford.* Your mistake fir is nothing but in the  
Mistresse. But my husbands name is *Foord* fir.

*Fal.* I shall desire your more acquaintance.  
The like of you good misteris *Page*.

*Mis. Pa.* With all my hart fir *Iohn*.  
Come husband will you goe?  
Dinner staies for vs.

*Pa.* With all my hart, come along Gentlemen.

*Exit all, but Slender and  
mistresse Anne.*

*Anne.*



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Anne.* Now forsooth why do you stay me?  
What would you with me?

*Slen.* Nay for my owne part, I would litle or nothing with you. I loue you well, and my vncler can tell you how my liuing stands. And if you can loue me why so. If not, why then happie man be his dole.

*An.* You say well M. *Slender*.  
But first you must giue me leaue to  
Be acquainted with your humor,  
And afterward to loue you if I can.

*Slen.* Why by God, there's neuer a man in christendome can desire more. What haue you Beares in your Towne mistresse *Anne*, your dogs barke so?

*An.* I cannot tell M. *Slender*, I thinke there be.

*Slen.* Ha how say you? I warrant your asfeard of a Beare let loose, are you not?

*An.* Yes trust me.

*Slen.* Now that's meate and drinke to me,  
Ile run yon to a Beare, and take her by the muffell,  
You neuer saw the like.

But indeed I cannot blame you,  
For they are maruellous rough things.

*An.* Will you goe in to dinner M. *Slender*?  
The meate staies for you.

*Slen.* No faith not I. I thanke you,  
I cannot abide the smell of hot meate  
Nere since I broke my shin. Ile tel you how it came  
By my troth. A Fencer and I plaid three venies  
For a dish of stewd prunes, and I with my ward  
Defending my head, he hot my shin. Yes faith.

*Enter*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Enter Maister Page.*

*Pa.* Come, come Maister *Slender*, dinner staies for you.

*Slen.* I can eate no meate, I thanke you.

*Pa.* You shall not choose I say.

*Slen.* Ile follow you sir, pray leade the way.

Nay be God misteris *Anne*, you shall goe first,  
I haue more manners then so, I hope.

*An.* Well sir, I will not be troublesome.

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter sir Hugh and Simple, from dinner.*

*Sir Hu.* Hark you *Simple*, pray you beareth this letter to Doctor *Cayus* house, the French Doctor. He is twell vp along the street, and enquire of his house for one mistris *Quickly*, his woman, or his try nurse, and deliuer this Letter to her, it tis about Maister *Slender*. Looke you, will you do it now?

*Sim.* I warrant you Sir.

*Sir Hu.* Pray you do, I must not be absent at the grace.

I will goe make an end of my dinner,  
There is pepions and cheefe behinde.

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter sir Iohn Falstaffes Host of the Garter,  
Nym, Bardolfe, Pistoll, and the boy.*

*Fal.* Mine Host of the Garter.

B

*Host.*

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Host.* What ses my bully Rooke?  
Speake schollerly and wisely.

*Fal.* Mine Host, I must turne away some of my  
followers.

*Host.* Discard bully, *Hercules* cassire.  
Let them wag, trot, trot.

*Fal.* I sit at ten pound a weeke.

*Host.* Thou art an Emperour *Cæsar*, *Pheffer* and  
*Kesar* bully.

Ile entertaine *Bardolfe*. He shall tap, he shall draw.  
Said I well, bully *Hector*?

*Fal.* Do good mine Host.

*Host.* I haue spoke. Let him follow. *Bardolfe*  
Let me see thee froth, and lyme. I am at  
A word. Follow, follow.

*Exit Host.*

*Fal.* Do *Bardolfe*, a Tapster is a good trade,  
An old cloake will make a new Ierkin,  
A withered seruingman, a fresh Tapster:  
Follow him *Bardolfe*.

*Bar.* I will sir, Ile warrant you Ile make a good  
shift to liue.

*Exit Bardolfe.*

*Pif.* O bace gongarian wight, wilt thou the spic-  
ket willd?

*Nym.* His minde is not heroick. And theres the  
humor of it.

*Fal.* Well my Laddes, I am almost out at the  
heeles.

*Pif.* Why then let cybes infue.

*Nym.* I thanke thee for that humor.

*Fal.*



*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Fal.* Well I am glad I am so rid of this tinder  
Boy.

His stealth was too open, his filching was like  
An vnskilfull finger, he kept not time.

*Nym.* The good humor is to steale at a minutes  
rest.

*Pis.* Tis so indeed *Nym*, thou hast hit it right.

*Fal.* Well, afore God, I must cheat, I must cony-  
catch.

Which of you knowes *Foord* of this Towne?

*Pis.* I ken the wight, he is of substance good.

*Fal.* Well my honest Lads, Ile tell you what  
I am about.

*Pis.* Two yards and more.

*Fal.* No gibes now *Pistol*: indeed I am two yards  
In the waist, but now I am about no waist:  
Briefly, I am about thrift you rogues you,  
I do intend to make loue to *Foord*s wife,  
I espie entertainment in her. She carues, she  
Discourses. She giues the lyre of inuitation,  
And euery part to be constured rightly is, I am  
*Syr Iohn Falstaffes*.

*Pis.* He hath studied her well, out of honestie  
Into English.

*Fal.* Now the report goes, she hath all the rule  
Of her husbands purse. She hath legions of angels.

*Pis.* As many diuels attend her.  
And to her boy say I.

*Fal.* Heere's a Letter to her. Heeres another to  
misteris *Page*.

B 2

Who

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Who euen now gaue me good eies too, examined my exteriors with such a greedy intentiō, with the beames of her beautie, that it seemed as she would a scorged me vp like a burning glasse. Here is another Letter to her, shee beares the purse too. They shall be Excheckers to me, and Ile be cheaters to them both. They shall be my East and West Indies, and Ile trade to them both. Heere beare thou this Letter to mistresse *Foord*. And thou this to mistresse *Page*. Weele thriue Lads, we will thriue.

*Pist.* Shall I fir Panderowes of *Troy* become?  
And by my sword were Steele.  
Then Lucifer take all.

*Nym.* Here take your humor Letter againe,  
For my part, I will keepe the hauior  
Of reputation. And theres the humor of it.

*Fal.* Here firrha beare me these Letters titely,  
Saile like my pinnice to the golden shores:  
Hence slaues, avant. Vanish like hailstones, goe.  
*Falstaffe* will learne the humor of this age,  
French thrift you rogue, my selfe and scirted *Page*.

*Exit Falstaffe,  
and the Boy.*

*Pis.* And art thou gone? Teaster Ile haue in pouch  
When thou shalt want, bace Phrygian Turke.

*Nym.* I haue operations in my head, which are  
humors of reuenge.

*Pis.* Wilt thou reuenge?

*Nym.* By *Welkin* and her Fairies.

*Pis.* By wit, or sword?

*Nym.* With both the humors I will disclose this  
loue to *Page*. Ile poses him with Iallowes,

And

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

And theres the humor of it.

*Pif.* And I to *Foord* will likewise tell  
How *Falstaffe* varlot vilde,  
Would haue her loue, his doue would proue,  
And eke his bed defile.

*Nym.* Let vs about it then. (on.

*Pif.* Ile second thee: fir Corporall *Nym* troope  
*Exit omnes.*

*Enter Mistresse Quickly, and Simple.*

*Quic.* M. *Slender* is your Masters name say you?

*Sim.* I indeed that is his name.

*Quic.* How say you? I take it hee is somewhat a  
weakly man:

And he has as it were a whay coloured beard.

*Sim.* Indeed my maisters beard is kane colored.

*Quic.* Kane colour, you say well.

And is this Letter from fir *Yon*, about Misteris *An*,  
Is it not?

*Sim.* I indeed is it.

*Quic.* So: and your Maister would haue me as  
it twere to speak to misteris *Anne* concerning him:  
I promise you my M. hath a great affectioned mind  
to mistresse *Anne* himselfe. And if he should know  
that I should as they say, giue my verdict for any one  
but himselfe, I should heare of it throughly: For  
I tell you friend, he puts all his priuities in me.

*Sim.* I by my faith you are a good staie to him.

*Quic.* Am I? I and you knew all yowd say so:  
Washing, brewing, baking, all goes through my  
Or else it would be but a woe house. (hands,

*Sim.* I beshrow me, one woman to do all this,

B 3

Is



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Is very painfull.

*Quic.* Are you auised of that? I, I warrant you,  
Take all, and paie all, all goe through my hands,  
And he is such a honest man, and he should chance  
To come home and finde a man here, we should  
Haue no who with him. He is a parlowes man.

*Sim.* Is he indeed?

*Quic.* Is he quoth you? God keepe him abroad:  
Lord bleffe me, who knocks there?  
For Gods sake step into the Counting-house,  
While I goe see whose at doore.

*He steps into the Counting-house.*

What *John Rugby*, *John*,  
Are you come home fir alreadie?

*And she opens the doore.*

*Doct.* I begar I be forget my oyntment,  
VVhere be *John Rugby*?

*Enter John.*

*Rug.* Here fir, do you call?

*Doc.* I you be *John Rugby*, and you be *Iack Rugby*  
Goe run vp met your heeles, and bring away  
De oyntment in de vindoe present:  
Make hast *John Rugby*. O I am almost forget  
My simples in a boxe in de Counting-house:  
O Ieshu vat be here, a deuella, a deuella?  
My Rapier *John Rugby*, Vat be you, vat make  
You in my Counting-house?  
I tinck you be a teefe.

*Quic.* Ieshu bleffe me, we are all vndone.

*Sim.* O Lord fir no: I am no theefe,  
I am a Seruingman:

My

*the merry wiues of windſor.*

My name is *Iohn Simple*, I brought a Letter fir  
From my M. *Slender*, about militeris *Anne Page*  
Sir: Indeed that is my comming.

*Doc.* I begar is dat all? *Iohn Rugby* giue a ma pen  
An Inck: tarche vn Pettit tarche a little.

*The Doctor writes.*

*Sim.* O God what a furious man is this?

*Quic.* Nay it is well he is no worfe:

I am glad he is ſo quiet.

*Doc.* Here giue dat ſame toſir *Hu*, it ber ve chalẽge  
Begar tell him I will cut his naſe, will you?

*Sim.* I ſir, Ile tell him ſo. (may.

*Doc.* Dat be vell, my Rapier *Iohn Rugby*, follow  
*Exit Doctor.*

*Quic.* VVell my friend, I cannot tarry, tell your  
Maifter Ile doo what I can for him,  
And ſo farewell.

*Sim.* Mary will I, I am glad I am got hence.

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter Miſtreſſe Page, reading of  
a Letter.*

(reaſon,

*Miſ. Pa.* Miſtreſſe *Page* I loue you. Aſke me no  
Beauſe they impoſſible to alledge. Your faire,  
And I am fat. Yon loue ſack, ſo do I:  
As I am ſure I haue no mind but to loue,  
So I know you haue no hart but to grant (knowes  
A ſouldier doth not vſe many words, where a  
A letter may ſerue for a ſentence. I loue you,  
And ſo I leaue you.

*Yours Syr Iohn Falſtaffe.*

Now

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Now Ieshu bleſſe me, am I methomorphiſed?  
I thinke I knowe not my ſelfe. Why what a Gods  
name doth this man ſee in me, that thus he ſhootes  
at my honeſtie? Well but that I knowe my owne  
heart, I ſhould ſcarcelly perſwade my ſelfe I were  
hand. Why what an vnreaſonable woollſack is this.  
He was neuer twice in my companie, and if then I  
thought I gaue ſuch aſſurance with my eies, Ide pul  
them out, they ſhould neuer ſee more holie daies.  
Well, I ſhall truſt ſat men the worſe while I liue for  
his ſake. O God that I knew how to be reuenged of  
him. But in good time, heeres miſtreſſe *Foord*.

*Enter Miſtreſſe Foord.*

*Miſ. For.* How now Miſtris *Page*, are you reading  
Loue Letters? How do you woman?

*Miſ. Pa.* O woman I am I know not what:  
In loue vp to the hard eares. I was neuer in ſuch a  
caſe in my life.

*Miſ. Ford.* In loue, now in the name of God with  
whom?

*Miſ. Pa.* With one that ſweares he loues me,  
And I muſt not chooſe but do the like againe:  
I prethie looke on that Letter.

*Miſ. For.* Ile match your letter iuſt with the like,  
Line for line, word for word. Only the name  
Of miſteris *Page*, and miſteris *Foord* diſagrees:  
Do me the kindnes to looke vpon this.

*Miſ. Pa.* Why this is right my letter.  
O moſt notorious villaine!  
Why what a bladder of iniquitie is this?  
Lets be reuenged what ſo ere we do.

*Miſ. For.* Reuenged, if we liue weel be reuenged.  
O Lord



*the merry wiues of windsor.*

O Lord if my husband should see this Letter,  
Ifaith this would euen giue edge to his Iealousie.

*Enter Ford, Page, Pistoll and Nym.*

*Mis. Pa.* See where our husbands are,  
Mine's as far from Iealousie,  
As I am from wronging him.

*Pis. Ford* the words I speake are forst :  
Beware, take heed, for *Falstaffe* loues thy wife :  
When *Pistoll* lies do this.

*Ford.* Why fir my wife is not young.

*Pis.* He wooes both yong and old, both rich and  
None comes amis. I say he loues thy wife : (poore  
Faire warning did I giue, take heed,  
For sommer comes, and Cuckoo birds appeare :

*Page* belieue him what he ses. Away fir Corporall

*Exit Pistoll: (Nym.*

*Nym.* Syr the humor of it is, he loues your wife,  
I should ha borne the humor Letter to her :  
I speake and I auouch tis true : My name is *Nym*.  
Farwell, I loue not the humor of bread and cheefe :  
And theres the humor of it. *Exit Nym.*

*Pa.* The humor of it, quoth you :  
Heres a fellow frites humor out of his wits.

*Mis. Pa.* How now sweet hart, how dost thou ?

*Enter Mistresse Quickly.*

*Pa.* How now man ? How do you mistris *Ford* ?

*Mis. For.* Well I thanke you good M. *Page*.  
How now husband, how chaunce thou art so me-  
lancholy ?

*Ford.* Melancholy, I am not melancholy.  
Goe get you in, goe.

*Mis. For.* God saue me, see who yonder is :

C

Weele

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Weele fet her a worke in this businesse.

*Mis. Pa.* O sheele serue excellent.

Now you come to see my daughter *An* I am sure.

*Quic.* I forsooth that is my comming.

*Mis. Pa.* Come go in with me. Come *Mis. Ford.*

*Mis. For.* I follow you Mistresse *Page.*

*Exit Mistresse Ford, Mis. Page, and Quickly.*

*For. M. Page* did you heare what these fellowses

*Pa.* Yes *M. Ford*, what of that fir? (said?)

*For.* Do you thinke it is true that they told vs?

*Pa.* No by my troth do I not,

I rather take them to be paltry lying knaues,

Such as rather speakes of enuie,

Then of any certaine they haue

Of any thing. And for the knight, perhaps

He hath spoke merrily, as the fashon of fat men

Are: But should he loue my wife,

Ifaith Ide turne her loose to him:

And what he got more of her,

Then ill lookes, and shrowd words,

Why let me beare the penaltie of it.

*For.* Nay I do not mistrust my wife,

Yet Ide be loth to turne them together,

A man may be too confident.

*Enter Host and Shallow.*

*Pa.* Here comes my ramping host of the garter,  
Ther's either licker in his hed, or mony in his purse,  
That he lookes so merily. Now mine Host?

*Host.* God bleffe you my bully rookes, God bleffe  
Cauelera Iustice I say. (you.

*Shal.* At hand mine host, at hand. *M. Ford* god den  
God den an twentie good *M. Page.* (to you.

I tell

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

I tell you fir we haue sport in hand.

*Host.* Tell him cauelira Iustice: tell him bully

*Ford.* Mine Host a the garter: (rooke.

*Host.* What ses my bully rooke?

*Ford.* A word with you fir,

*Ford and the Host talkes.*

*Shal.* Harke you fir, Ile tell you what the sport  
Doctor *Cayus* and fir *Hu* are to fight, (shall be,

My merrie Host hath had the meafuring  
Of their weapons, and hath (eare:

Appointed them contrary places. Harke in your

*Host:* Haft thou no shute against my knight,  
My guest, my cauellira:

*For.* None I protest: But tell him my name  
Is *Rrooke*, onlie for a Iest.

*Host:* My hand bully: Thou shalt  
Haue egres and regres, and thy  
Name shall be *Brooke*: Sed I well bully Hector?

*Shal.* I tell you what *M. Page*, I belecue  
The Doctor is no Iester, heele laie it on:

For tho we be Iustices and Doctors,  
And Church men, yet we are  
The sonnes of women *M. Page*:

*Pa:* True maister *Shallow*:

*Shal:* It will be found so maister *Page*:

*Pa.* Maister *Shallow* you your selfe  
Haue bene a great fighter,  
Tho now a man of peace:

*Shal:* *M. Page* I haue seene the day that yong  
Tall fellowes with their stroke & their passado,  
I haue made them trudge Maister *Page*,  
A tis the hart, the hart doth all: I

C 2

Haue



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Haue seene the day, with my two hand sword  
I would a made you foure tall Fencers  
Scipped like Rattes.

*Host.* Here boyes, shall we wag, shall we wag?

*Shal.* Ha with you mine host.

*Exit Host and Shallow.*

*Pa.* Come M. *Ford*, shall we to dinner?  
I know these fellowes sticks in your minde.

*For.* No in good sadnesse not in mine:  
Yet for all this Ile try it further,  
I will not leaue it so:

Come M. *Page*, shall we to dinner?

*Pa.* With all my hart sir, Ile follow you.

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter Syr Iohn, and Pistoll.*

*Fal.* Ile not lend thee a peny.

*Pis.* I will retort the sum in equipage.

*Fal.* Not a pennie: I haue beene content you  
shuld lay my countenance to pawne: I haue grated  
vpon my good friends for 3. repruiues, for you and  
your Coach-fellow *Nym*, else you might a looked  
thorow a grate like a geminy of babones. I am dam-  
ned in hell for swearing to Gentlemen your good  
fouldiers and tall fellowes: And when mistresse *Bri-*  
*get* lost the handle of her Fan, I tooked on my ho-  
thou hadst it not.

*Pis.* Didst thou not share? hadst thou not fif-  
teene pence?

*Fal.* Reason you rogue, reason.

Doest thou thinke Ile indanger my foule gratis?  
In briefe, hang no more about mee, I am no gybit  
for you. A short knife and a throng to your manner  
of

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

of pickt hatch, goe. Youle not beare a Letter for me  
you rogue you: you stand vpon your honor. Why  
thou vnconfinable basenesse thou, tis as much as I  
can do to keep the termes of my honor precise. I, I  
my selfe sometimes, leauing the feare of God on  
the left hand, am faine to shuffel, to filch & to lurch.  
And yet you stand vpon your honor, you rogue.  
You, you.

*Pis.* I do recant: what wouldst thou more of man?

*Fal.* Well, gotoo, away, no more.

*Enter Mistresse Quickly.*

*Quic.* Good you god den sir.

*Fal.* Good den faire wife.

*Quic.* Not so ant like your worship.

*Fal.* Faire mayd then.

*Quic.* That I am Ile be sworne, as my mother  
The first houre I was borne. (was  
Sir I would speake with you in priuate.

*Fal.* Say on I prethy, heeres none but my owne  
houshold.

*Quic.* Are they so? Now God bleffe them, and  
make them his seruants.

Syr I come from Mistresse *Foord*.

*Fal.* So from Mistresse *Foord*. Goe on.

*Quic.* I sir, she hath sent me to you to let you  
Vnderstand she hath receiued your Letter, (dit.  
And let me tell you, she is one stands vpon her cre-

*Fal.* Well, come Mистерis *Ford*, Mистерis *Ford*.

*Quic.* I sir, and as they say, she is not the first  
Hath bene led in a fooles paradise.

*Fal.* Nay prethy be briefe my good she *Mercury*.

*Quic.* Mary sir, sheed haue you meet her between  
eight and nine. C 3 *Fal.*

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Fal.* So betweene eight and nine: (birding,

*Quic.* I forsooth, for then her husband goes a

*Fal.* Well commend me to thy mistress, tel her  
I will not faile her: Boy giue her my purse.

*Quic.* Nay sir I haue another arant to do to you  
From misteris *Page*:

*Fal.* From misteris *Page*? I prethy what of her?

*Quic.* By my troth I think you work by Inchant-  
Els they could neuer loue you as they doo: (ments,

*Fal.* Not I, I assure thee: setting the attraction of my  
Good parts aside, I vse no other enchantments:

*Quic.* Well sir, she loues you extreemly:  
And let me tell you, shee's one that feares God,  
And her husband giues her leaue to do all:

For he is not halfe so ieaiousie as M. *Ford* is. (*Ford*,

*Fal.* But harke thee, hath misteris *Page* & mistress  
Acquainted each other how dearly they loue me?

*Quic.* O God no sir: there were a iest indeed.

*Fol.* Well farwel, commend me to misteris *Ford*,  
I will not faile her say.

*Quic.* God be with your worship.

*Exit Mistresse Quickly.*

*Enter Bardolfe.*

*Bar.* Sir heer's a Gentleman,  
One M. *Brooke*, would speak with you,  
He hath sent you a cup of sacke.

*Fal.* M. *Brooke*, hees welcome: Bid him come vp,  
Such *Brookes* are alwaies welcome to me:

A *Iack*, will thy old bodie yet hold out?  
Wilt thou after the expence of so much mony  
Be now a gainer? Good bodie I thanke thee,  
And Ile make more of thee then I ha done:

Ha



*the merry wiues of windsor.*

Ha, ha, misteris *Ford*, and misteris *Page*, haue  
I caught you a the hip? go too.

*Enter Foord disguised like Brooke.*

*For.* God saue you sir.

*Fal.* And you too, would you speak with me?

*Fal.* Mary would I sir, I am somewhat bolde to  
My name is *Brooke*. (trouble you,

*Fal.* Good M. *Brooke* your verie welcome.

*For.* Ifaith sir I am a gentleman and a traueller,  
That haue seen somewhat. And I haue often heard  
That if mony goes before, all waies lie open.

*Fal.* Mony is a good fouldier sir, and will on.

*For.* Ifaith sir, and I haue a bag here,  
Would you wood helpe me to beare it.

*Fal.* O Lord, would I could tell how to deferue  
To be your porter.

*For.* That may you easily sir *John*: I haue an ear-  
Sute to you. But good sir *John* when I haue (nest  
Told you my grieve, cast one eie of your owne  
Estate, since your selfe knew what tis to be  
Such an offender.

*Fal.* Verie well sir, proceed.

*For.* Sir I am deeply in loue with one *Fords* wife  
Of this Towne. Now sir *John* you are a gentleman  
Of good discourfing, well beloued among Ladies,  
A man of such parts that might win 20. such as she.

*Fal.* O good sir. (loue

*For.* Nay beleue it sir *John*, for tis time. Now my  
Is so grounded vpon her, that without her loue  
I shall hardly liue.

*Fal.* Haue you importuned her by any means?

*Ford.* No neuer Sir.

*Fal.* Of

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Fal.* Of what qualitie is your loue then?

*Ford.* Ifaith fir, like a faire house set vpon  
Another mans foundation. (me?)

*Fal.* And to what end haue you vnfolded this to

*For.* O fir, when I haue told you that, I told you  
For she fir stands so pure in the firme state (all:  
Of her honestie, that she is too bright to be looked  
Against: Now could I come against her  
With some detectiö, I should sooner perswade her  
From her marriage vow, and a hundred such nice  
Tearmes that sheele stand vpon.

*Fal.* Why would it apply well to the veruenfie  
of your affection, (ioy?  
That another should possesse what you would en-  
Meethinks you prescribe verie proposterously  
To your selfe.

*For.* No fir, for by that meanes should I be cer-  
taine of that which I now misdoubt.

*Fal.* Well M. *Brooke*, Ile first make bold with your  
Next, giue me your hand. Lastly, you shall (mony,  
And you will, enioy *Fords* wife.

*For.* O good fir.

*Fal.* M. *Brooke*, I say you shall.

*Ford.* Want no mony Syr *John*, you shall want

*Fal.* Want no Milsteris *Ford* M. *Brooke*, (none.  
You shall want none. Euen as you came to me,  
Her spokes mate, her go between parted from me:  
I may tell you M. *Brooke*, I am to meet her  
Between 8. and 9. for at that time the Iealous  
Cuckally knaue her husband wil be from home,  
Come to me soone at night, you shall know how  
I speed M. *Brooke*.

*Ford.*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Ford.* Sir do you know *Ford*? (him not,

*Fal.* Hang him poore cuckally knaue, I know  
And yet I wrong him to call him poore. For they  
Say the cuckally knaue hath legions of angels,  
For the which his wife seemes to me well fauored,  
And Ile vse her as the key of the cuckally knaues  
Coffer, and there's my randeuowes.

*Ford.* Meethinkes fir it were very good that you  
*Ford*, that you might shun him. (knew

*Fal.* Hang him cuckally knaue, Ile stare him  
Out of his wits, Ile keepe him in awe  
With this my cudgell: It shall hang like a meator  
Ore the wittolly knaues head, *M. Brooke* thou shalt  
See I will predominate ore the peasant,  
And thou shalt lie with his wife. *M. Brooke*  
Thou shalt know him for knaue and cuckold,  
Come to me soone at night.

*Exit Falstaffe.*

*Ford.* What a damned epicurian is this?  
My wife hath sent for him, the plot is laid:  
*Page* is an Ass, a foole. A secure Ass,  
Ile sooner trust an Irishman with my  
Aquauita bottle, Sir *Hu* our parson with my cheese,  
A theefe to walk my ambling gelding, thẽ my wife  
With her selfe: then she plots, then she ruminates,  
And what she thinkes in her hart she may effect,  
Sheele breake her hart but she will effect it.  
God be praised, God be praised for my ieaousie:  
Well Ile goe preuent him, the time drawes on,  
Better an houre too soone, then a minit too late,  
Gods my life cuckold, cuckold.

*Exit Ford.*

D

*Enter*



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Enter the Doctor and his man.*

*Doc.* *Iohn Rugbie* goe looke met your eies ore de  
And spie and you can see de parson. (stall,

*Rug.* Sir I cannot tell whether he be there or no,  
But I see a great many comming.

*Doc.* Bully moy, mon rapier *Iohn Rugabie*, begar  
Hearing be not so dead as I shall make him. de

*Enter Shallow, Page, my Host, and Slender.*

*Pa.* God saue you M. Doctor *Cayus*.

*Shal.* How do you M. Doctor? (thee,

*Host.* God bleffe thee my bully doctor, God bleffe

*Doc.* Vat be all you, Van to tree com for, a?

*Host.* Bully to see thee fight, to see thee foine, to  
see thee trauerse, to see thee here, to see thee there,  
to see thee passe the punto. The stock, the reuerse,  
the distance: the montnce is a dead my francoyes?  
Is a dead my Ethiopian? Ha what ses my gallon?  
my escuolapis? Is a dead bullies taile, is a dead?

*Doc.* Begar de preest be a coward Iack knaue,  
He dare not shew his face.

*Host.* Thou art a castallian king vrinall.

*Hector of Greece* my boy.

*Shal.* He hath showne himselfe the wiser man  
M. Doctor:

Sir *Hugh* is a Parson, and you a Phisition. You must  
Goe with me M. Doctor.

*Host.* Pardon bully Iustice. A word monfire

*Doc.* Mockwater, vat me dat? (mockwater.

*Host.* That is in our English tongue, Vallor bully,  
vallor.

*Doc.*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Doc.* Begar den I haue as mockuater as de Inglish Iack dog, knaue.

*Host.* He will claperclaw thee titely bully.

*Doc.* Claperclawe, vat be dat?

*Host.* That is, he will make thee amends.

*Doc.* Begar I do looke he shal claperclaw me dē,  
And Ile prouoke him to do it, or let him wag:  
And moreouer bully, but M. *Page* and M. *Shallow*,  
And eke cauellira *Slender*, go you all ouer the fields  
to Frogmore?

*Pa.* Sir *Hugh* is there, is hee?

*Host.* He is there: goe see what humor hee is in,  
Ile bring the Doctor about by the fields:  
Will it do well?

*Shal.* We wil do it my host. Farwel M. Doctor.

*Exit all but the Host and Doctor.*

*Doc.* Begar I will kill de cowardly Iack preeft,  
He is make a foole of moy.

*Host.* Let him die, but first sheth your impatience,  
Throw cold water on your collor, com go with me  
Through the fields to *Frogmore*, and Ile bring thee  
Where mistris *An Page* is a feasting at a farm house,  
And thou shalt wear hir cried game: sed I wel bully

*Doc.* Begar excellent vel: and if you speak pour  
moy, I shall procure you de gesse of all de gentelmē  
mon patinces. I begar I fall.

*Host.* For the which Ile be thy aduersary  
To misteris *An Page*: Sed I well?

*Doc.* I begar excellent.

*Host.* Let vs wag then.

*Doc.* Alon, alon, alon.

*Exit omnes.*

D 2

*Enter*

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Enter Syr Hugh and Simple.*

(espie

*Sir Hu.* I pray you do so much as see if you can  
Doctor *Cayus* comming, and giue me intelligence,  
Or bring me vrde if you please now.

*Sim.* I will Sir.

*Sir Hu.* Ieshu ples mee, how my hart trobes, and  
And then she made him bedes of Rofes, (trobes,  
And a thousand fragrant poses,  
To shallow riueres. Now so kad vdge me, my hart  
Swelles more and more. Mee thinkes I can cry  
Verie well. There dwelt a man in *Babylon*,  
To shallow riuers and to falles,  
Melodious birds sing Madrigalles.

*Sim.* Sir here is M. *Page*, and M. *Shallow*,  
Comming hither as fast as they can. (sword,

*Sir Hu.* Then it is verienecessary I put vp my  
Pray giue me my cowne too, marke you.

*Enter Page, Shallow, and Slender.*

*Pa.* God faue you Sir *Hugh*.

*Shal.* God faue you M. parson. (now.

*Sir Hu.* God plesse you all from his mercies sake

*Pa.* What the word and the sword, doth that a-  
gree well?

*Sir Hu.* There is reasons and causes in all things,  
I warrant you now.

*Pa.* Well Sir *Hugh*, we are come to craue  
Your helpe and furtherance in a matter.

*Sir Hu.* What is I pray you?

*Pa.* Ifaith tis this sir *Hugh*. There is an auncient  
friend of ours, a man of verie good fort, so at oddes  
with



*the merry wiues of windsor.*

with one patience, that I am sure you would hartily griue to see him. Now Sir *Hugh*, you are a scholler well red, and verie perswasieue, we would intreate you to see if you could intreat him to patience.

*Sir Hu.* I pray you who is it? Let vs know that.

*Pa.* I am shure you know him, tis Doctor *Cayus*.

*Sir Hu.* I had as lecue you should tel me of a messe He is an arant lowsie beggerly knaue: (of poredge, And he is a coward beside.

*Pa.* Why Ile laie my life tis the man That he should fight withall.

*Enter Doctor and the Host, they offer to fight.*

*Shal.* Keep them asunder, take away their wea-

*Host.* Disarme, let them question. (pons.

*Shal.* Let them keep their limbs hole, and hack our English.

*Doc.* Hark van vrd in your eare. You be vn daga And de Iack, coward preest.

*Sir Hu.* Harke you, let vs not be laughing stockes to other mens humors. By Ieshu I will knock your vrinalls about your knaues cockcomes, for missing your meetings and appointments.

*Doc.* O Ieshu mine host of de garter, *John Rogoby*, Haue I not met him at de place he make apoint, Haue I not?

*Sir Hu.* So kad vdge me, this is the pointment Witnes by my Host of the garter. (place,

*Host.* Peace I say gawle and gawlia, French and Soule curer, and bodie curer. (Wealch,

*Doc.* This is verie braue, excellent.

*Host.* Peace I say, heare mine host of the garter,

D 3 Am

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Am I wife? am I polliticke? am I Matchauil?  
Shall I lose my doctor? No, he giues me the motiōs  
And the potions. Shall I lose my parson, my fir *Hu*?  
No, he giues me the prouerbes, and the nouerbes:  
Giue me thy hand terrestiall,  
So giue me thy hand celestiall:  
So boyes of art I haue deceiued you both,  
I haue directed you to wrong places,  
Your hearts are mightie, you skins are whole,  
*Bardolfe* laie their swords to pawne. Follow me lads  
Of peace, follow me. Ha, ra, la. Follow. *Exit Host.*

*Shal.* Afore God a mad host, come let vs goe.

*Doc.* I begar haue you mocka may thus?

I will be euen met you my Iack Host.

*Sir Hu.* Giue me your hand Doctor *Cayus*,  
We be all friends:

But for mine hosts foolish knauery, let me alone.

*Doc.* I dat be vell begar I be friends. (*Exit omnes*  
*Enter M. Foord.*

*For.* The time drawes on he shuld come to my  
Well wife, you had best worke closely, (house,  
Or I am like to goe beyond your cunning:  
I now wil seek my guesse that comes to dinner,  
And in good time see where they all are come.

*Enter Shallow, Page, host, Slender, Doctor,*  
*and sir Hugh.*

By my faith a knot well met: your welcome all.

*Pa.* I thanke you good M. *Ford.*

*For.* Welcome good M. *Page*,  
I would your daughter were here.

*Pa.* I thank you fir, she is very well at home.

*Slen.* Father *Page* I hope I haue your consent  
For Mистерis *Anne*? *Pa.*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Pa.* You haue sonne *Slender*, but my wife here,  
Is altogether for maister Doctor.

*Doc.* Begar I tanck her hartily:

*Host.* But what say you to yong Maister *Fenton*?  
He capers, he daunces, he writes verses, he smelles  
All April and May: he wil cary it, he wil carit,  
Tis in his betmes he wil carite.

*Pa.* My host not with my cōsent: the gentleman is  
Wilde, he knowes too much: If he take her,  
Let him take her simply: for my goods goes  
With my liking, and my liking goes not that way.

*For.* Well I pray go home with me to dinner:  
Besides your cheare Ile shew you wonders: Ile  
Shew you a monster. You shall go with me  
*M. Page*, and so shall you sir *Hugh*, and you Maister  
Doctor. (two:

*S. Hu* If there be one in the company, I shal make

*Doc.* And dere be ven to, I sall make de tird:

*Sir Hu*, In your teeth for shame, (fairer

*Shal*: wel, wel, God be with you, we shall haue the  
Wooring at Maister *Pages*:

*Exit Shallow and Slender,*

*Host* Ile to my honest knight sir *John Falstaffe*,  
And drinke Canary with him. *Exit host.*

*Ford.* I may chance to make him drinke in pipe  
First come gentlemen. *Exit omnes.* (wine,

*Enter Mistresse Ford, with two of her men, and  
a great buck basket.*

*Mis. For.* Sirrha, if your M. aske you whither  
You carry this basket, say to the Launderers,  
I hope you know how to bestow it?

*Ser.* I warrant you misteris. *Exit seruant.*

*Mis. Ford*



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Mis. For.* Go get you in. Well fir *Iohn*,  
I belecue I shall serue you such a trick,  
You shall haue little mind to come againe.

*Enter Sir Iohn.*

*Fal.* Haue I caught my heauenlie Iewel?  
Why now let me die. I haue liued long inough,  
This is the happie houre I haue desired to see,  
Now shall I sin in my wish,  
I would thy husband were dead.

*Mis. For.* Why how then fir *Iohn*?

*Fal.* By the Lord, Ide make thee my Ladie.

*Mis. For.* Alas fir *Iohn*, I should be a verie simple  
Ladie.

*Fal.* Goe too, I see how thy eie doth emulate  
the Diamond.

And how the arched bent of thy brow  
Would become the ship tire, the tire vellet,  
Or anie Venetian attire, I see it. (better.

*Mis. For.* A plaine kercher fir *Iohn*, would fit me

*Fal.* By the Lord thou art a traitor to saie so:  
What made me loue thee? Let that perswade thee  
Ther's somewhat extraordinarie in thee: Goe too  
I loue thee:

*Mistris Ford*, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, like one  
Of these fellows that smels like Bucklers-berie,  
In simple time, but I loue thee,  
And none but thee.

*Mis. For.* Sir *Iohn*, I am afraid you loue misteris

*Fal.* I thou mightest as well saie (Page.  
I loue to walke by the Counter gate,  
VVhich is as hatefull to me  
As the reake of a lime kill.

*Enter*

*the merry wiues of windſor.*

*Enter Miſtreſſe Page.*

*Miſ. Pa.* Miſtreſſe *Ford*, *Miſ. Ford*, where are you?

*Miſ. For.* O Lord ſtep aſide good ſir *Iohn*.

*Falſtaffe ſtands behind the aras.*

How now Miſteris *Page* whats the matter?

*Miſ. Pa.* Why your husband woman is cōming,  
With halfe *Windſor* at his heeles,  
To looke for a gentleman that he ſes  
Is hid in his houſe: his wifes ſweet hart.

*Miſ. For.* Speak louder. But I hope tis not true  
Miſteris *Page*.

*Miſ. Pa.* Tis too true woman. Therefore if you  
Haue any here, away with him, or your vndone for  
euer.

*Miſ. For.* Alas miſtreſſe *Page*, what ſhall I do?  
Here is a gentleman my friend, how ſhall I do?

*Miſ. Pa.* Gode body woman, do not ſtand what  
ſhal I do, and what ſhall I do. Better any ſhift, rather  
then you ſhamed. Looke heere, here's a buck-baſ-  
ket, if hee be a man of any reaſonable ſiſe, heele in  
here.

*Miſ. For.* Alas I feare he is too big.

*Fal.* Let me ſee, let me ſee, Ile in, Ile in,  
Follow your friends counſell. (*Aſide.*)

*Miſ. Pa.* Fie ſir *Iohn* is this your loue? Go too.

*Fal.* I loue thee, and none but thee:  
Helpe me to conuey me hence,  
Ile neuer come here more.

E

Sir

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Sir Iohn goes into the basket, they put cloathes ouer him, the two men carries it away: Foord meetes it, and all the rest, Page, Doctor, Priest, Slender, Shallow.*

*Ford.* Come pray along, you shall see all.

How now who goes heare? whither goes this?  
Whither goes it? set it downe.

*Mis. For.* Now let it go, you had best meddle with  
buck-washing.

*Ford.* Buck, good buck, pray come along,  
Maister *Page* take my keyes: helpe to search. Good  
*Sir Hugh* pray come along, helpe a little, a little,  
Ile shew you all.

*Sir Hu.* By Ieshu these are iعالosies & distemperes.  
*Exit omnes.*

*Mis. Pa.* He is in a pittifull taking.

*Mis.* I wonder what he thought  
Whẽ my husband bad them set downe the basket.

*Mis. Pa.* Hang him dishonest flaue, we cannot vse  
Him bad inough. This is excellent for your  
Husbands iعالousie.

*Mi. For.* Alas poore foule it grieues me at the hart,  
But this will be a meanes to make him cease  
His iعالous fits, if *Falstaffes* loue increase.

*Mis. Pa.* Nay we wil send to *Falstaffe* once again,  
Tis great pittie we should leaue him:

What wiues may be merry, and yet honest too.

*Mi. For.* Shall we be cõdemnd because we laugh?  
Tis old, but true: still sowes eate all the draffe.

*Enter all.*

*Mis. Pa.* Here comes your husband, stand aside.

*For.* I can find no body within, it may be he lied.

*Mis. Pa.* Did you heare that? *Mis. For.*



*the merry wiues of windſor.*

*Mif. For.* I, I, peace.

*For.* Well Ile not let it go ſo, yet Ile trie further.

*S. Hu.* By Ieſhu if there be any body in the kitchin  
Or the cuberts, or the preſſe, or the buttery,  
I am an arrant Iew: Now God pleaſſe me:  
You ſerue me well, do you not?

*Pa.* Fie M. *Ford* you are too blame:

*Mif. Pa.* Ifaith tis not well M. *Ford* to ſuſpect  
Her thus without cauſe.

*Doc.* No by my trot it be no vell:

*For.* Wel I pray bear with me, M. *Page* pardõ me.  
I ſuffer for it, I ſuffer for it: (now:

*Sir Hu:* You ſuffer for a bad conſcience looke you

*Ford:* Well I pray no more, another time Ile tell  
you all:

The mean time go dine with me, pardõ me wife,  
I am ſorie. M. *Page* pray goe in to dinner,  
Another time Ile tell you all.

*Pa:* Wel let it be ſo, and to morrow I inuite you all  
To my houſe to dinner: and in the morning wee  
A birding, I haue an excellent Hauke for the buſh.

*Ford:* Let it be ſo: Come M. *Page*, come wife:  
I pray you come in all, your welcome, pray come

*Sir Hu:* By ſo kad vdgme, M. *Fordes* is (in.  
Not in his right wittes:

*Exit omnes:*

*Enter Sir Iohn Falſtaffe.*

*Fal:* *Bardolfe* brew me a pottle ſack preſently:

*Bar:* With Egges fir?

*Fal:* Simply of it ſelfe, Ile none of theſe pullets  
In my drinke: goe make haſte. (ſperme  
Haue I liued to be carried in a basket

E 2

And

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

and throwne into the Thames like a barow of Butchers offoll. Well, and I be ferued fuch another tricke, Ile giue them leaue to take out my braines and butter them, and giue them to a dog for a new-yeares gift. Sblood, the rogues flided me in with as little remorse as if they had gone to drowne a blind bitches puppies in the litter: and they might know by my life I haue a kind of alacritie in finking: and the bottom had bin as deep as hell I should downe. I had bene drowned, but that the shore was sheluie and somewhat shallowe: a death that I abhorre. For you know the water swelles a man: and what a thing should I haue bene whē I had bene swelled? By the Lord a mountaine of money. Now is the Sacke brewed?

*Bar.* I fir, there's a woman below would speake with you.

*Fal.* Bid her come vp. Let me put some Sacke among this cold water, for my belly is as cold as if I had swallowed snow-balles for pilles.

*Enter Mistresse Quickly.*

Now whats the newes with you?

*Quic.* I come from milteris *Ford* forsooth.

*Fal.* Mистерis *Ford*, I haue had *Ford* inough, I haue bene throwne into the *Ford*, my belly is full Of *Ford*: she hath tickled mee.

*Quic.* O Lord fir, she is the sorrowfullest woman that her seruants mistooke, that euer liued. And fir, she would desire you of all loues you will meet her once againe, to morrow fir, betweene ten and eleuen, and she hopes to make amends for all.

*Fal.* Ten, and eleuen, faiest thou?

*Quic.* I

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Quic.* I forsooth.

*Fal.* Well, tell her Ile meet her. Let her but think  
Of mans frailtie: Let her iudge what man is,  
And then thinke of me. And so farwell.

*Quic* Youle not faile fir?

*Exit mistresse Quickly.*

*Fal.* I will not faile. Commend me to her.  
I wonder I heare not of M. *Brooke*, I like his  
Mony well. By the masse here he is.

*Enter Brooke.*

*For.* God saue you fir.

*Fal.* Welcome good M. *Brooke*. You come to  
know how matters goes.

*Ford.* Thats my comming indeed fir *John*.

*Fal.* M. *Brooke* I will not lie to you fir,  
I was there at my appointed time.

*For.* And how sped you fir?

*Fal.* Verie ilfauouredly fir.

*For.* Why fir, did she change her determination?

*Fal.* No M. *Brooke*, but you shall heare. After we  
had kissed and imbraced, and as it were euen amid  
the prologue of our incounter, who should come,  
but the iealous knaue her husband, and a rabble of  
his companions at his heeles, thither prouoked and  
instigated by his distemper. And what to do thinke  
you? to search for his wiues loue. Euen so, plainly  
so.

*For.* While ye were there?

*Fal.* Whilst I was there.

*For.* And did he search and could not find you?

*Fal.* You shall heare fir, as God would haue it,  
A litle before comes me one *Pages* wife,

E 3

Giues



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Giues her intelligence of her husbands  
Approach: and by her inuention, and *Fords* wiues  
Distraction, conueyd me into a buck-basket.

*Ford.* A buck-basket!

*Fal.* By the Lord a buck-basket, rammed me in  
With foule shirts, stokin, greasie napkins,  
That *M. Brooke*, there was a compound of the most  
Villanous smel, that euer offended nostrill.  
Ile tell you *M. Brooke*, by the Lord for your sake  
I suffered three egregious deaths: First to be  
Crammed like a good bilbo, in the circumference  
Of a pack, Hilt to point, heele to head: and then to  
Be stewed in my owne grease like a Dutch dish:  
A man of my kidney; by the Lord it was maruell I  
Escaped suffication; and in the heat of all this,  
To be throwne into Thames like a horshee hot:  
Maister *Brooke*, thinke of that hissing heate, Maister  
*Brooke*.

*Ford.* Well fir then my shute is void?  
Youle vndertake it no more?

*Fal.* *M. Brooke*, Ile be throwne into Etna  
As I haue bene in the Thames,  
Ere I thus leaue her: I haue receiued  
Another appointment of meeting,  
Between ten and eleuen is the houre.

*Ford:* Why fir, tis almost ten already:

*Fal:* Is it? why then will I addresse my selfe  
For my appointment: *M. Brooke* come to me soone  
At night, and you shall know how I speed,  
And the end shall be, you shall enioy her loue:  
You shall cuckold *Foord*: Come to mee soone at  
at night.

*Exit Falstaffe.*

*Ford*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*For.* Is this a dreame? Is it a vision?

*Maister Ford, maister Ford, awake maister Ford,*  
There is a hole made in your best coat *M. Ford,*  
And a man shall not only endure this wrong,  
But shall stand vnder the taunt of names,  
*Lucifer* is a good name, *Barbasen* good: good  
Diuels names: But cuckold, wittold, godeso  
The diuel himselfe hath not such a name:  
And they may hang hats here, and napkins here  
Vpon my hornes: Well Ile home, I ferit him,  
And vnlesse the diuel himselfe should aide him,  
Ile search vnpossible places: Ile about it,  
Least I repent too late:

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter M. Fenton, Page, and mistresse*

*Quickly.*

(resolue,

*Fen:* Tell me sweet *Nan*, how doest thou yet  
Shall foolish *Slender* haue thee to his wife?  
Or one as wise as he, the learned Doctor?  
Shall such as they enioy thy maiden hart?  
Thou knowst that I haue alwaies loued thee deare,  
And thou hast oft times swore the like to me.

*An:* Good *M. Fenton*, you may assure your selfe  
My hart is setled vpon none but you,  
Tis as my father and mother please:  
Get their consent, you quickly shall haue mine.

*Fen:* Thy father thinks I loue thee for his wealth,  
Tho I must needs confesse at first that drew me,  
But since thy vertues wiped that trash away,  
I loue thee *Nan*, and so deare is it set,  
That whilst I liue, I nere shall thee forget.

*Quic:* Godes

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Godes pitie here comes her father.

*Enter M. Page his wife, M. Shallow, and Slender.*

*Pa.* M. *Fenton* I pray what make you here?

You know my answere sir, shees not for you:

Knowing my vow, to blame to vse me thus.

*Fen.* But heare me speake sir.

*Pa.* Pray sir get you gon: Come hither daughter, Sonne *Slender* let me speak with you. (*they whisper.*

*Quic.* Speake to Misteris *Page*.

*Fen.* Pray misteris *Page* let me haue your cōsent.

*Mis. Pa.* Ifaith M. *Fentō* tis as my husband please.

For my part Ile neither hinder you, nor further

*Quic.* How say you this was my doings? (you. I bid you speake to misteris *Page*.

*Fen.* Here nurse, theres a brace of angels to drink, Worke what thou canst for me, farwell. (*Exit Fen.*

*Quic.* By my troth so I will, good hart. (*Slēder*

*Pa.* Come wife, you an I will in, wee leaue M. And my daughter to talke together. M. *Shallow*, You may stay sir if you please.

*Exit Page and his wife.*

*Shal.* Mary I thanke you for that:

To her cousin, to her.

*Slen.* Ifaith I know not what to say.

*An.* Now M. *Slender*, whats your will? (*An,*

*Slen.* Godefo theres a Iest indeed: why misteris I neuer made wil yet: I thāk God I am wise inough

*Shal.* Fie cusse fie, thou art not right, (for that. O thou hadst a father.

*Slen.* I had a father misteris *Anne*, good vncle Tell the Iest how my father stole the goose out of The henloft. All this is nought, harke you mistresse

*Anne.*

*Shal.*



*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Shal.* He will make you ioynter of three hundred pound a yeare, he shall make you a Gentlewoman.

*Slend.* I be God that I vill, come cut and long taile, as good as any is in *Glostershire*, vnder the degree of a Squire.

*An.* O God how many grosse faults are hid,  
And couered in three hundred pound a yeare?  
Well M. *Slender*, within a day or two Ile tell you more.

*Slend.* I thanke you good misteris *Anne*, vncle I shall haue her.

*Quic.* M. *Shallow*, M. *Page* would pray you to come you, and you M. *Slender*, and you mistris *An.*

*Slend.* Well Nurse, if youle speake for me,  
Ile giue you more then Ile talke of.

*Exit omnes but Quickly.*

*Quic.* Indeed I will, Ile speake what I can for you,  
But specially for M. *Fenton*:

But specially of all for my Maister.

And indeed I will do what I can for them all three.

*Exit.*

*Enter misteris Ford and her two men.*

*Mis. For.* Do you heare? when your M. comes take vp this basket as you did before, and if your M. bid you set it downe, obey him.

*Ser.* I will forsooth.

*Enter Syr Iohn.*

*Mis. For.* Syr *Iohn* welcome.

*Fal.* What are you sure of your husband now?

*Mis. For.* He is gone a birding sir *Iohn*, and I hope will not come home yet.

F

*Enter*

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

*Enter mistresse Page.*

Gods body here is misteris *Page*,  
Step behind the arras good sir *Iohn*.

*He steps behind the arras.*

*Mis. Pa.* Misteris *Ford*, why woman your husband  
is in his old vaine againe, hees comming to search  
for your sweet heart, but I am glad he is not here.

*Mis. For.* O God misteris *Page* the knight is here,  
What shall I do?

*Mis. Pa.* Why then you'r vndone woman, vnles  
you make some meanes to shift him away.

*Mis. For.* Alas I know no meanes, vnlesse  
we put him in the basket againe.

*Fal.* No Ile come no more in the basket,  
Ile creep vp into the chimney. (ling peeces.

*Mis. For.* There they vse to discharge their Fow-

*Fal.* Why then Ile goe out of doores.

*Mi. Pa.* Then your vndone, your but a dead man.

*Fal.* For Gods sake deuise any extremitie,  
Rather then a mischiefe.

*Mis. Pa.* Alas I know not what meanes to make,  
If there were any womans apparell would fit him,  
He might put on a gowne and a muffler,  
And so escape.

*Mi. For.* Thats wel remembred, my maids Aunt  
*Gillian* of *Brainford*, hath a gowne aboue.

*Mis. Pa.* And she is altogether as fat as he.

*Mis. For.* I that will serue him of my word.

*Mis. Pa.* Come goe with me sir *Iohn*, Ile helpe to  
dresse you.

*Fal.* Come for God sake, any thing.

*Exit Mis. Page, & Sir Iohn.*

*Enter*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Enter M. Ford, Page, Priest, Shallow, the two men  
carries the basket, and Ford meets it.*

*For.* Come along I pray, you shal know the cause,  
How now whither goe you? Ha whither go you?  
Set downe the basket you fflaue,  
You panderly rogue set it downe. (thus?)

*Mis. For.* What is the reason that you vse me

*For.* Come hither set downe the basket,  
Misteris *Ford* the modest woman,  
Misteris *Ford* the vertuous woman,  
She that hath the iealous foole to her husband,  
I mistrust you without cause do I not?

*Mis. For.* I Gods my record do you. And if  
you mistrust me in any ill fort.

*Ford.* Well sed brazen face, hold it out,  
You youth in a basket, come out here,  
Pull out the cloathes, searh. (cloathes?)

*Hu.* Ieshu plesse me, will you pull vp your wiues

*Pa.* Fie *M. Ford* you are not to go abroad if you  
be in these fits.

*Sir Hu.* By so kad vdge me, tis verie necessarie  
He were put in pethlem.

*For.* *M. Page*, as I am an honest man *M. Page*,  
There was one conueyd out of my house here ye-  
sterday out of this basket, why may he not be here  
now?

*Mi. For.* Come mistris *Page*, bring the old womã

*For.* Old woman, what old woman? (downe.

*Mi. For.* Why my maidens Ant, *Gilliã* of *Brainford*.  
A witch, haue I not forewarned her my house,  
Alas we are simple we, we know not what

F 2

Is



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Is brought to passe vnder the colour of fortune-  
Telling. Come downe you witch, come downe.

*Enter Falstaffe disguised like an old woman, and mi-  
steris Page with him, Ford beates him, and hee  
runnes away.*

Away you witch get you gone. (indeed,

Sir *Hu.* By Ieshu I verily thinke she is a witch  
I espied vnder her muffler a great beard.

*Ford.* Pray come helpe me to search, pray now.

*Pa.* Come weele go for his minds sake.

*Exit omnes.*

*Mi. For.* By my troth he beat him most extreemly.

*Mi. Pa.* I am glad of it, what shall we proceed any  
further?

*Mi. For.* No faith, now if you will let vs tell our  
husbands of it. For mine I am sure hath almost fret-  
ted himselve to death.

*Mi. Pa.* Content, come weele goe tell them all,  
And as they agree, so will we proceed. *Exit both.*

*Enter Host and Bardolfe.*

*Bar.* Syr heere be three Gentlemen come from  
the Duke the Stanger sir, would haue your horse.

*Host.* The Duke, what Duke? let me speake with  
the Gentlemen, do they speake English?

*Bar.* Ile call them to you sir.

*Host.* No *Bardolfe*, let them alone, Ile sauce them:  
They haue had my house a weeke at command,  
I haue turned away my other guesse,  
They shall haue my horses *Bardolfe*,

They must come off, Ile sawce them. *Exit omnes.*

*Enter Ford, Page, their wiues, Shallow, and Slen-  
der. Syr Hu.*

*Ford.*

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

*Ford.* Well wife, heere take my hand, vpon my  
soule I loue thee dearer then I do my life, and ioy I  
hnuue so true and constant wife, my iealousie shall  
neuer more offend thee.

*Mi. For.* Sir I am glad, & that which I haue done,  
Was nothing else but mirth and modestie.

*Pa.* I misteris *Ford*, *Falstaffe* hath all the grieffe,  
And in this knauerie my wife was the chiefe.

*Mi. Pa.* No knauery husband, it was honest mirth.

*Hu.* Indeed it was good pastimes & merriments.

*Mis. For.* But sweete heart shall wee leaue olde  
*Falstaffe* so?

*Mis. Pa.* O by no meanes, fend to him againe.

*Pa.* I do not thinke heele come being so much  
deceiued.

*For.* Let me alone, Ile to him once againe like  
*Brooke*, and know his mind whether heele come  
or not. (come.

*Pa.* There must be some plot laide, or heele not

*Mis. Pa.* Let vs alone for that. Heare my deuice.  
Oft haue you heard since *Horne* the hunter dyed,  
That women to affright their litle children,  
Ses that he walkes in shape of a great stagge.  
Now for that *Falstaffe* hath bene so deceiued,  
As that he dares not venture to the house,  
Weele fend him word to meet vs in the field,  
Disguised like *Horne*, with huge horns on his head,  
The houre shalbe iust betweene twelue and one,  
And at that time we will meet him both:  
Then would I haue you present there at hand,  
With litle boyes disguised and dressed like Fayries,  
For to affright fat *Falstaffe* in the woods.

F 3

And

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

And then to make a period to the Iest,  
Tell *Falstaffe* all, I thinke this will do best.

*Pa.* Tis excellent, and my daughter *Anne*,  
Shall like a litle Fayrie be disguised.

*Mis. Pa.* And in that Maske Ile make the Doctor  
steale my daughter *An*, & ere my husband knowes  
it, to carrie her to Church, and marrie her. (boyes?

*Mis. For.* But who will buy the filkes to tyre the

*Pa.* That will I do, and in a robe of white  
Ile cloath my daughter, and aduertise *Slender*  
To know her by that signe, and steale her thence,  
And vnkowne to my wife, shall marrie her.

*Hu.* So kad vdge me the deuises is excellent.  
I will also be there, and be like a lackanapes,  
And pinch him most cruelly for his lecheries.

*Mis. Pa.* Why then we are reuenged sufficiently.  
First he was carried and throwne in the Thames,  
Next beaten well, I am sure youle witnes that.

*Mi. For.* Ile lay my life this makes him nothing fat.

*Pa.* Well lets about this stratagem, I long  
To see deceit deceiued, and wrong haue wrong.

*For.* Well send to *Falstaffe*, and if he come thither,  
Twill make vs smile and laugh one moneth togi-  
ther.

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter Host and Simple.* (skin?

*Host.* What would thou haue boore, what thick-  
Speake, breath, discus, short, quick, briefe, snap.

*Sim.* Sir, I am sent frō my M. to sir *John Falstaffe*.

*Host.* Sir *John*, theres his Castle, his standing bed,  
his trundle bed, his chamber is painted about with  
the story of the prodigall, fresh and new, go knock,  
heelee speak like an Antripophiginian to thee:

Knocke



*the merry wiues of windsor.*

Knock I fay.

*Sim.* Sir I should ſpeak with an old woman that went vp into his chamber.

*Host.* An old woman, the knight may be robbed, Ile call bully knight, bully fir *Iohn*. Speake from thy Lungs military: it is thine hoſt, thy Epheſian calls.

*Fal.* Now mine Hoſt.

*Host:* Here is a Bohemian tarter bully, tarries the comming downe of the fat woman: Let her deſcēd bully, let her deſcend, my chambers are honorable, pah priuaſie, fie.

*Fal.* Indeed mine hoſt there was a fat woman with But ſhe is gone. (me,

*Enter Sir Iohn.*

*Sim.* Pray fir was it not the wiſe woman of *Brainford*?

*Fal.* Marry was it Muſſelſhell, what would you?

*Sim.* Marry fir my maiſter *Slender* ſent me to her, To know whether one *Nim* that hath his chaine, Couſoned him of it, or no.

*Fal.* I talked with the woman about it.

*Sim.* And I pray fir what ſes ſhe?

*Fal.* Marry ſhe ſes the very ſame man that Beguiled maiſter *Slender* of his chaine, Couſoned him of it.

*Sim.* May I be bolde to tell my maiſter ſo fir?

*Fal.* I tike, who more bolde.

*Sim.* I thanke you fir, I ſhall make my maiſter a glad man at theſe tydings, God be with you fir.

*Host.* Thou art clarkly fir *Iohn*, thou art clarkly, Was there a wiſe woman with thee?

*Fal.* Marry was there mine hoſt, one that taught  
Me

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

Me more wit then I learned this 7. yeare,  
And I paid nothing for it,  
But was paid for my learning.

*Enter Bardolfe.*

*Bar.* O Lord fir coufonage, plaine coufonage.

*Host.* Why man, where be my horsfes? where be  
the Germanes?

*Bar.* Rid away with your horsfes:  
After I came beyond Maidenhead,  
They flung me in a flow of myre, & away they ran.

*Enter Doctor.*

*Doc.* Where be my Host de gartyre?

*Host.* O here fir in perplexitie.

*Doc.* I cannot tell vad be dad,  
But begar I will tell you van ting,  
Dear be a Garmaine Duke come to de Court,  
Has cosened all de host of *Branford*,  
And *Redding*: begar I tell you for good will,  
Ha, ha, mine Host, am I euen met you? *Exit.*

*Enter Sir Hugh.*

*Sir Hu.* Where is mine Host of the gartyr?  
Now my Host, I would desire you looke you now,  
To haue a care of your entertainments,  
For there is three sorts of cosen garmombles,  
Is cosen all the Host of Maidenhead & Readings,  
Now you are an honest man, and a scuruy beg-  
gerly lowsie knaue beside:  
And can point wrong places,

I tell you for good will, grate why mine Host. *Exit.*

*Host.* I am cosened *Hugh*, and coy *Bardolfe*,  
Sweet knight assist me, I am cosened. *Exit.*

*Fal.* Would all the worell were cosened for me,  
For

*the merry wiues of windsor.*

For I am coufoned and beaten too.  
Well, I neuer prospered fince I forswore  
My felfe at *Primero*: and my winde  
Were but long inough to fay my prayers,  
Ide repent, now from whence come you?

*Enter Miftrefse Quickly.*

*Quic.* From the two parties forsooth.

*Fal.* The diuell take the one partie,  
And his dam the other,  
And theyle be both bestowed.  
I haue endured more for their fakes,  
Then man is able to endure.

*Quic.* O Lord fir, they are the forowfull creatures  
That euer liued: fpecially miftrefse *Ford*,  
Her husband hath beaten her that fhe is all  
Blacke and blew poore foule.

*Fal.* What telleft me of blacke and blew,  
I haue bene beaten all the colours in the Rainbow,  
And in my escape like to a bene apprehended  
For a witch of *Brainford*, and fet in the ftockes.

*Quic.* Well fir, fhe is a forrowfull woman,  
And I hope when you heare my errant,  
Youle be perfwaded to the contrarie.

*Fal.* Come goe with me into my chamber, Ile  
heare thee. *Exit omnes.*

*Enter Hofst and Fenton.*

*Hofst.* Speake not to me fir, my mind is heauie,  
I haue had a great losse.

*Fen.* Yet heare me, and as I am a gentleman,  
Ile giue you a hundred pound toward your losse.

*Hofst.* Well fir Ile heare you, and at leaft keep your  
counsell.

*Fen.* The thus my hofst. Tis not vnkown to you,  
G The



*A pleasant Comedie, of*

The feruent loue I beare to young *Anne Page*,  
And mutally her loue againe to mee :  
But her father still against her choise,  
Doth seeke to marrie her to foolish *Slender*,  
And in a robe of white this night disguised,  
Wherein fat *Falstaffe* had a mightie scare,  
Must *Slender* take her and carrie her to *Catlen*,  
And there vnknowne to any, marrie her.  
Now her mother still against that match,  
And firme for Doctor *Cayus*, in a robe of red  
By her deuice, the Doctor must steale her thence,  
And she hath giuen consent to goe with him.

*Host.* Now which means she to deceiue, father or mother ?

*Fen.* Both my good Host, to go along with me.  
Now here it rests, that you would procure a priest,  
And tarrie readie at the appointment place,  
To giue our harts vnited matrimonie. (among thẽ?)

*Host.* But how will you come to steale her from

*Fen.* That hath sweet *Nan* and I agreed vpon,  
And by a robe of white, the which she weares,  
With ribones pendant flaring bout her head,  
I shalbe sure to know her, and conuey her thence,  
And bring her where the priest abides our cõming,  
And by thy furtherance there be married.

*Host.* Well, husband your deuice, Ile to the Vicar,  
Bring you the maide, you shall not lacke a Priest.

*Fen.* So shall I euermore be bound vnto thee.  
Besides Ile alwaies be thy faithfull friend.

*Exit omnes.*

*Enter sir Iohn with a Bucks head vpon him.*

*Fal.* This is the third time, well Ile venter,  
They say there is good luck in old numbers,  
*Ioue* transformed himselfe into a bull, And

*the merry wiues of windſor.*

And I am here a Stag, and I thinke the fatteſt  
In all *Windſor* forreſt: well I ſtand here  
For *Horne* the hunter, waiting my Does comming.

*Enter miſtris Page, and miſtris Ford.*

*Miſ. Pa.* Sir *John*, where are you?

*Fal.* Art thou come my doe? what and thou too?  
Welcome Ladies.

*Mi. For.* I ſir *John*, I ſee you will not faile,  
Therefore you deſerue far better then our loues,  
But it grieues me for your late croſſes.

*Fal.* This makes amends for all.

Come diuide me betweene you, each a hanch,  
For my horns Ile bequeath thẽ to your husbands,  
Do I ſpeake like *Horne* the hunter, ha?

*Miſ. Pa.* God forgiue me, what noiſe is this?

*There is a noiſe of hornes, the two women run away.*

*Enter ſir Hugh like a Satyre, and boyes dreſt like Fayries,  
miſtreſſe Quickly, like the Queene of Fayries: they  
ſing a ſong about him, and afterward ſpeake.*

(groues,

*Quic:* You Fayries that do haunt theſe ſhady  
Looke round about the wood if you can eſpie  
A mortall that doth haunt our ſacred round:  
If ſuch a one you can eſpie, giue him his due,  
And leaue not till you pinch him blacke and blew:  
Giue them their charge *Puck* ere they part away.

*Sir Hu.* Come hither *Peane*, go to the countrie  
houſes,

And when you finde a flut that lies a ſleepe,  
And all her diſhes foule, and roome vnſwept,  
With your long nailes pinch her till ſhe crie,

G 2

And

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

And sweare to mend her fluttish hufwiferie.

*Fai.* I warrant you I will performe your will.

*Hu.* Where is *Pead*? go you & see where Brokers  
And Foxe-eyed Seriants with their mase, (sleep,  
Goe laie the Proctors in the street,  
And pinch the lowlie Seriants face:  
Spare none of these when they are a bed,  
But such whose nose lookes plew and red.

*Quic.* Away begon, his mind fulfill,  
And looke that none of you stand still.  
Some do that thing, some do this,  
All do something, none amis.

*Hir Hu.* I smell a man of middle earth.

*Fal.* God blesse me from that wealch Fairie.

*Quic.* Looke euery one about this round,  
And if that any here be found,  
For his presumption in this place,  
Spare neither legge, arme, head, nor face.

*Sir Hu.* See I haue spied one by good luck,  
His bodie man, his head a buck.

*Fal.* God send me good fortune now, and I care

*Quic.* Go strait, and do as I commaund, (not.  
And take a Taper in your hand,  
And set it to his fingers endes,  
And if you see it him offends,  
And that he starteth at the flame,  
Then is he mortall, know his name:  
If with an F. it doth begin,  
Why then be shure he is full of fin.  
About it then, and know the truth,  
Of this same metamorphis'd youth.

*Sir Hu.* Giue me the Tapers, I will try  
And if that he loue venery.

*They*



*the merry wiues of windſor.*

*They put the Tapers to his fingers, and he ſtarts.*

*Sir Hu.* It is right indeed, he is full of lecheries  
and iniquitie.

*Quic.* A little diſtant from him ſtand,  
And euery one take hand in hand,  
And compaſſe him within a ring,  
Firſt pinch him well, and after ſing.

*Herethey pinch him, and ſing about him, & the Doc-  
tor comes one way & ſteales away a boy in red. And  
Slender another way he takes a boy in greene: And  
Fenton ſteales miſteris Anne, being in white. And  
a noyſe of hunting is made within: and all the Fai-  
ries runne away. Falſtaffe pulles of his bucks head,  
and riſes up. And enters M. Page, M. Ford, and  
their wiues, M. Shallow, Sir Hugh.*

*Fal.* Horne the hunter quoth you: am I a gholt?  
Sblood the Fairies hath made a gholt of me:  
What hunting at this time at night?

Ile lay my life the mad Prince of *Wales*  
Is ſtealing his fathers Deare. How now who haue  
we here, what is all *Windſor* ſtirring? Are you there?

*Shal.* God ſaue you fir *Iohn Falſtaffe.*

*Sir Hu.* God pleaſe you fir *Iohn*, God pleaſe you.

*Pa.* Why how now fir *Iohn*, what a pair of horns  
in your hand?

*Ford.* Thoſe hornes he ment to place vpon my  
And M. *Brooke* and he ſhould be the men: (head,  
Why how now fir *Iohn*, why are you thus amazed?  
We know the Fairies man that pinched you ſo,  
Your throwing in the Thames, your beating well,

G

3

And

*A pleasant Comedie, of*

And whats to come fir *Iohn*, that can we tell.

*Mi. Pa.* Sir *Iohn* tis thus, your dishonest meanes  
To call our credits into question,  
Did make vs vndertake to our best,  
To turne your leaud lust to a merry Iest.

*Fal.* Iest, tis well, haue I liued to these yeares  
To be gulled now, now to be ridden?  
Why then these were not *Fairies*?

*Mis. Pa.* No fir *Iohn* but boyes.

*Fal.* By the Lord I was twice or thrise in the  
They were not, and yet the grosnesse (mind  
Of the fopperie perswaded me they were.  
Well, and the fine wits of the Court heare this,  
Thayle so whip me with their keene Iests,  
That thayle melt me out like tallow,  
Drop by drop out of my grease. Boyes!

*Sir Hu.* I trust me boyes Sir *Iohn*: and I was  
Also a Fairie that did helpe to pinch you.

*Fal.* I, tis well I am your May-pole,  
You haue the start of mee,  
Am I ridden too with a wealch goate?  
With a peece of toasted cheefe?

*Sir Hu.* Butter is better then cheefe fir *Iohn*,  
You are all butter, butter.

*For.* There is a further matter yet fir *Iohn*,  
There's 20. pound you borrowed of M. *Brooke* Sir  
And it must be paid to M. *Ford* Sir *Iohn*. (*Iohn*,

*Mi. For.* Nay husband let that go to make amēds,  
Forgiue that sum, and so wee le all be friends.

*For.* Well here is my hand, all's forgiuen at last.

*Fal.* It hath cost me well,  
I haue bene well pinched and washed.

*Enter*

*the merry wiues of windſor.*

*Enter the Doctor.*

*Mi. Pa.* Now M. Doctor, ſonne I hope you are.

*Doct.* Sonne begar you be de ville voman,  
Begar I tinck to marry metres *An*, and begar  
Tis a whorſon garſon Iack boy.

*Miſ. Pa.* How a boy?

*Doct.* I begar a boy.

*Pa.* Nay be not angry wife, Ile tell thee true,  
It was my plot to deceiue thee ſo:  
And by this time your daughter's married  
To M. *Slender*, and ſee where he comes.

*Enter Slender.*

Now ſonne *Slender*,  
Where's your bride?

*Slen.* Bride, by Gods lyd I thinke theres neuer a  
man in the worell hath that croſſe fortune that I  
haue: begod I could cry for verie anger.

*Pa.* Why whats the matter ſonne *Slender*?

*Slen.* Sonne, nay by God I am none of your ſon.

*Pa.* No, why ſo? (married.

*Slen.* Why ſo God ſaue me, tis a boy that I haue

*Pa.* How a boy? why did you miſtake the word?

*Slen.* No neither, for I came to her in red as you  
bad me, and I cried mum, and hee cried budget, ſo  
well as euer you heard, and I haue married him.

*Sir Hu.* Ieſhu M. *Slender*, cannot you ſee but marrie

*Pa.* O I am vext at hart, what ſhal I do? (boyes?)

*Enter Fenton and Anne.*

*Miſ. Pa.* Here comes the man that hath deceiued  
How now daughter, where haue you bin? (vs all:

*An.* At Curch forſooth.

*Pa.* At Church, what haue you done there?

*Fen.*



*A pleasaunt Comedie, of*

*Fen.* Married to me, nay fir neuer storme,  
Tis done fir now, and cannot be vndone.

*Ford:* Ifaith M. *Page* neuer chafe your selfe,  
She hath made her choise wheras her hart was fixt,  
Then tis in vaine for you to storme or fret.

*Fal.* I am glad yet that your arrow hath glanced

*Mi. For.* Come mistris *Page*, Ile be bold with you,  
Tis pitie to part loue that is so true.

*Mis. Pa.* Altho that I haue missed in my intent,  
Yet I am glad my husbands match was crossed,  
Here M. *Fenton*, take her, and God giue thee ioy.

*Sir Hu:* Come M. *Page*, you must needs agree.

*Fo.* I yfaith fir come, you see your wife is wel plea-

*Pa.* I cannot tel, and yet my hart's well eased, (sed:  
And yet it doth me good the Doctor missed.

Come hither *Fenton*, and come hither daughter,  
Go too you might haue stai'd for my good will,  
But since your choise is made of one you loue,  
Here take her *Fenton*, & both happie proue. (dings.

*Sir Hu.* I wil also dance & eat plums at your wed-

*Ford.* All parties pleased, now let vs in to feast,  
And laugh at *Slender*, and the Doctors ieast.  
He hath got the maiden, each of you a boy  
To waite vpon you, so God giue you ioy,  
And fir *Iohn Falstaffe* now shal you keep your word,  
For *Brooke* this night shall lye with mistris *Ford*.

*Exit omnes.*

*F I N I S.*

## NOTES.

N.B. The differences between the texts of the first quarto (1602) and first folio (1623) are presumably due to one or more of the following agents: a *reporter* who compiled the quarto text from the play as acted; an *adapter* who altered the play as written for purposes of stage representation; a *reviser* who worked over the play as originally written between the dates of the two printed texts. To determine the respective responsibility of these agents is the main object of the following notes.

Title-page. *Syr Hugh the Welch Knight*. This slip shows that the title-page was composed in the printer's office by some one with a very slight knowledge of the play.

Scene i (ll. 1-120) = I. i (of folio version).

This scene is much cut in the quarto. This is largely rendered possible by implying (ll. 14, &c.) that negotiations for a match between Slender and Anne have already taken place and omitting all conversations on the subject except those between the principals. Lines 3-110 and 205-75 of the folio version are bodily omitted. This shortening might be supposed due to the stage adapter, in spite of the fact that it leaves the part subsequently played by Evans rather obscure. Since, however, later instances of shortening are apparently due to the reporter, who began with a good deal more care than he ended, it is not impossible to hold him responsible for the considerable reconstruction this scene has undergone. This view is supported by evidence tending to show that the acting version contained passages omitted in their place by the reporter (ll. 129-30). The condensation (as distinct from cutting) which runs throughout the scene, might conceivably be also due in part to an adapter, but it is rather to be credited as a whole to the reporter, whose presence is clearly seen in certain passages (e.g. ll. 117-19). He is certainly

responsible for the transposition at ll. 81-6, the introduction of the lines at this point having possibly caused the inversion of ll. 92-102 and 103-10. In two passages (ll. 44-6 and 109-10) the quarto supplements the folio text, and in one other passage (ll. 70-1) it preserves a possibly genuine speech, but in no case are these passages absolutely necessary to the sense.

21. *arbitrarments* for 'arbitrement', with the sense of judgement or arbitration. The corresponding passage in the folio (I. i. 139-43) concerns the stealing of Slender's purse and is rather more explicit: 'Peace, I pray you: now let vs vnderstand: there is three Vmpires in this matter, as I vnderstand; that is, Master Page,' &c. In neither case, as it seems, had the parties agreed to submit their dispute; in the quarto Falstaff is not even present. The confusion is evidently due to the reporter.

29. *Councell*. The folio text, which runs parallel to ll. 72-44, reads 'King', and the fact has been thought to point to a revision of the play after James's accession. Little weight, however, attaches to the argument, since 'King' would be historically correct. More significant is the expression in the folio (I. iv. 6): 'here will be an old abusing of Gods patience, and the Kings English' (omitted in the quarto), a passage in which historical accuracy is very unlikely. The King's English would have been as unnatural a mode of expression in 1600 as in 1900.

39. *vrdes*, i.e. words. The folio has 'worts'. The reporter has put a wrong corruption into Evans's mouth and so made nonsense of Falstaff's retort.

44-6. *They carried mee... pocket*. These words are not in the folio though it amplifies considerably at this point. Malone introduced them into his text from the quarto and has been followed by many subsequent editors. They certainly help the sense though not strictly necessary to it.

57. *honor*. Presumably a mere misprint for 'humor'.

70-1. *Your mistake sir... is Foord sir*. The folio has nothing corresponding to these lines, though they have a genuine appearance, and were almost certainly in the acting version. Hart notes: 'This passage shows that the term mistress belonged at this



time (1602) correctly and distinctively to a maid or unmarried woman.' This is an error. Mrs. Ford is disclaiming any pretension to gentility. Such was undoubtedly the specific implication of the prefix 'mistress', though it was widely used in common speech. Henslowe in his Diary applies it to all except the very poorest women whom he styles 'goody', i. e. goodwife.

81-6. *What would you wish me? . . . be his dole.* These lines occur much later in the folio text (III. iv. 63-8). Daniel observed that they were 'evidently misplaced' in the quarto, which could not therefore be original. I have no doubt his view is correct, but the present passage does not prove it, the quarto text being quite defensible.

92-110. *What have you Beares . . . Yes faith.* The two portions of this conversation, namely the bear part (ll. 92-102) and the fencing part (ll. 103-10), occur in the reverse order in the folio.

106-10. *I cannot abide the smell . . . he hot my shin.* Here the quarto seems more intelligible than the folio, which reads (I. i. 293-7): 'I bruiz'd my shin th'other day, with playing at Sword and Dagger with a Master of Fence (three veneyes for a dish of stew'd Prunes) and by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meate since.' Whether Slender's rigmarole was intended to be intelligible is another question. I incline to think the folio reading due to accidental omission, for I cannot agree with Hart (p. xxii) that the quarto is here 'corrupted for simplicity and brevity's sake'. He also appears (p. 27) to regard 'hot' in l. 110 as a misprint for 'brok'. It certainly stands for 'hit' (the reading of Q<sub>2</sub>), but possibly also contains a pun.

117-19. *Nay be God . . . troublesome.* The parts of Slender and Anne are transposed from the folio text, which reads (I. i. 320-6):

*Sl.* Mistris *Anne*: your selfe shall goe first.

*An.* Not I Sir, pray you keepe on . . .

*Sl.* Ile rather be vnmanly, then troublesome . . .

The reporter evidently remembered the words but confused the speakers.

## Scene ii (ll. 121-133) = I. ii.

This short scene is substantially the same in the two versions. Unless we suppose revision, which is unlikely, the differences must be due to the reporter, since the quarto merely obscures the action without materially altering in length.

129-30. *I must not be absent at the grace.* This remark occurs earlier in the folio (I. i. 273), where, of course, it refers to the ante-prandial grace. Either its present position was original, and it was moved back in a subsequent revision—for what reason it is impossible to conjecture—or, more likely, its appearance here is due to the reporter. If so, it follows that the conversation in which it occurred (I. i. 205-74) was not cut in representation, as might otherwise have been supposed.

## Scene iii (ll. 134-237) = I. iii.

Throughout this scene the two versions are in remarkable agreement. It is clear that the scene was staged without alteration and that the reporter has been unusually successful in reproducing it. There are one or two trifling corruptions in the folio (cf. ll. 177, 231). The only possible hints of revision occur at ll. 160, 162-3, and 226, but in no case do they amount to much. I have annotated this scene rather fully on the ground that where the versions are so close minor variations acquire significance.

134. *sir Iohn Falstaffes Host of the Garter.* This must be due to an original reading '*sir Iohn Falstaffe, his Host of the Garter*' having dropped its comma and been mistaken for a pronominal possessive.

159. *Exit Bardolfe.* The direction is not in the folio. Modern editors place it after the next speech (I. iii. 24).

160. *gongarian.* If this is anything but a corruption of the folio reading '*hungarian*' it has not been explained. Steevens quoted from 'one of the old bombast plays' (the title of which he unfortunately '*forgot to note*') the line: '*O base Gongarian, wilt thou the distaff wield?*' Until the passage has been rediscovered comment is useless.

162-3. *His minde is not heroick. And theres the humor of it.* The corresponding reading in the folio is (I. iii. 25): 'He was gotten in drink: is not the humor cōceited?' Steevens clumsily appended the quarto reading to that of the folio. Hart apparently regarded both readings as genuine, though alternative, for he wrote that 'The words [of the quarto] make the allusion contained in "gotten in drink" more explicit', the allusion being to the belief that a drunken man could only beget girls, the trade of tapster being regarded as effeminate. If so there has been revision; but I am inclined to ascribe the quarto reading to the reporter.

164-7. *Well my Laddes . . . for that humor.* There is a slight transposition here, the first three lines occurring in the folio somewhat later after the 'steal' passage, while the fourth belongs to an omitted passage at I. iii. 71. The confusion, which is awkward, is doubtless due to the reporter. The constant repetition of 'Well' (ll. 164, 168, 175, 179) is a sign of clumsy reconstruction from memory.

168. *tinder Boy.* A compositor's misreading of 'Tinderbox' (folio).

172. *minuses.* The ingenious emendation 'minim's' continues the musical metaphor, but is inadmissible in view of the agreement of the quarto and folio readings.

174. *Tis so indeed Nym, thou hast hit it right.* A singularly vapid substitute of the reporter for the folio reading (I. iii. 32): 'Conuay: the wise call it: Steale? foh: a fico for the phrase.'

177. *knowes.* Stricter grammar than the folio reading 'know'.

190. *well.* The folio reads 'will', adding 'and translated her will': presumably the correct reading, though several editors read 'well' in both places.

194. *attend her.* This gives good sense, if a commonplace moral. But it probably originated through a misunderstanding by the reporter of the remoter significance of the folio reading 'entertain', and produced the subsidiary change from 'he' to 'She' in the previous line.

198-201. *examined my exteriors. . . like a burning glasse.* Condensed with slight transposition from the folio text (I. iii. 67, &c.):



examind my parts with most iudicious illiads [œillades]:  
 sometimes the beame of her view, gilded my foote:  
 sometimes my portly belly.

*Pist.* Then did the Sun on dung-hill shine.

*Ni.* I thanke thee for that humour.

*Fal.* O she did so course o're my exteriors with such a  
 greedy intention . . .

The reporter may be pardoned for failing to understand the passage if the actor pronounced 'œillades' as it is printed in the folio.

218. *my selfe and scirted Page.* It should be remarked that where the quarto has 'Page' and the folio 'Page', most modern editors read (perhaps rightly) 'page'.

223. *in my head.* These words are not in the folio text, and were quite unnecessarily inserted from the quarto by Pope, thus finding their way into various modern editions.

226. *Fairies.* The folio reads 'Star'. The discrepancy is a little surprising. I think the reporter must have mistaken Welkin for the name of a witch or spirit, and forgetting the exact phrase, have thought Fairies appropriate.

229-30. *Ile poses . . . humor of it.* In the folio these words form part of Nym's subsequent speech: 'I will possesse him with yallownesse, for the reuolt of mine is dangerous: that is my true humour.'

231-4. *And I to Foord . . . his bed defile.* The rime has been obscured by the use of the old form 'vilde'. The lines are clearly a reconstruction from memory of those in the folio (I. iii. 115, &c.):

And I to *Page* shall eke vnfold  
 How *Falstaffe* (varlet vile)  
 His Doue will proue; his gold will hold,  
 And his soft couch defile.

The internal rime fixed itself in the reporter's memory, but he failed to recall its nature. It should be noticed that in ll. 229 and 231 the quarto gives the names correctly: they are transposed in the folio.

## Scene iv (ll. 238-310) = I. iv.

The quarto offers a greatly compressed text of this scene. What it gives is practically a rough summary, with a good deal of transposition of ll. 1-131 of the folio text, the remainder, the Fenton part, being unrepresented. Had this latter appeared in the acting version it would be natural to look for some trace of it in the reporter's text; it is therefore possible that the stage adapter cut it out. On the other hand, unless the reporter happened to remember the dialogue particularly well it would be difficult for him to make anything of the scene, and since he is here still working with some care he may have preferred to omit it altogether. In the earlier portion of the scene the condensation seems due to the reporter alone. The only hint of revision is noted at l. 270.

243. *a whay coloured beard.* The corresponding words in the folio (given to Simple) are: 'a little wee-face; with a little yellow Beard' (I. iv. 22-3). Hart has a confused but suggestive note. 'Wee' is not found elsewhere in Shakespeare. 'Whay' would give a parallel to the isolated locution 'Whay-face' in *Macbeth*, V. iii. 17. 'Wee' was probably not in use in the South so early as 1600 except in the phrase 'a wee bit'. Moreover in this phrase the word was constantly confused with 'way', which shows both that it was unfamiliar and that the vowel was pronounced as in 'whay'. If 'wee-face' is possible for 1600, 'whay' is probably a misunderstanding; but more likely 'whey-face' is original, written 'way-face' and emended by the compositor of 1623 into 'wee-face'.

246. *fir Ton.* This looks, at first sight, like a corruption of 'fir *Iohn*', but it must be 'fir *Hugh*' that is meant. Most probably therefore it is a misprint for 'fir *Tou*', this form being due to a mishearing.

251. *I promise you my M., &c.* The texts do not run parallel about this point, but a good deal of the substance of the following lines occurs later on in the folio (I. iv. 100, &c.).

263. *Take all, and paie all.* This was a current phrase and may easily have been introduced by the reporter on his own initiative. It should, however, be observed that it occurs in a

subsequent passage in the folio (II. ii. 123) which is not found in the quarto, the connexion being quite different.

270. *Counting-house*: cf. ll. 272, 284, 287. The folio has 'Closset' throughout. It is difficult to see how the inappropriate reading of the quarto arose.

281. *Goe run up met your heeles*. The folio reads: 'come after my heele to the Court.' This looks like unintelligent patchwork of the reporter, who remembered the word 'heel' and forgot the context.

296. *tarche vn petit tarche a little*. It would seem that the quarto reading is either based on a mishearing, or else represents some corruption of actor's gag.

301. *sir Hu*. It has been the subject of remark that there is nothing in the quarto text to inform the doctor that Evans has any concern in the matter. This seems to dispose of the view that the divergence of the texts at this point can be due either to revision or stage adaptation, and forces us back on the carelessness of the reporter.

*it ber ve chalège*, presumably for 'it bears the challenge'.

307. *Ile doo what I can for him*. This line corresponds to two earlier passages of the folio text (I. iv. 34-5, 97-8).

### Scene v (ll. 311-464) = II. i.

This scene is greatly condensed in the quarto down to the appearance of the Host. From that point to the end it is much fuller, but shows a good deal of minor, and some striking, transposition, and even refashioning. There is nothing to indicate stage adaptation, and except in the case of the name 'Brooke' (l. 433) little to suggest revision (see, however, ll. 439, 457).

328. *hand*. Evidently corrupt, but what was intended? 'Honest' seems the obvious word.

332-3. *Well, I shall trust fat men the worse while I liue for his sake*. This sentiment occurs rather later in the folio (II. i. 55-6): 'I shall thinke the worse of fat men, as long as I haue an eye to make difference of mens liking.' In the present place the folio has (II. i. 28-30): 'why Ile Exhibit a Bill in the Parliament for the putting downe of men.'



Theobald and Malone, on the supposed authority of the quarto, very gratuitously printed 'fat men'.

336. *How now Mistress Page*, &c. About this point the quarto more or less reverses the parts as given in the folio, where for instance l. 345 belongs to a speech of Mrs. Ford's, ll. 347-8 to one of Mrs. Page's, l. 350 of Mrs. Ford's again. With l. 353 the speakers get regular once more.

339. *to the hard eares*, to the very ears (not in the folio).

363. *When Pistoll lies do this*. Not in the folio, but the remark is found in 2 *Henry IV* (V. iii. 124). A somewhat similar case occurs a few lines earlier (l. 352) where Mrs. Page says of Falstaff, 'Why what a bladder of iniquitie is this?' Falstaff compares himself to a bladder in 1 *Henry IV* (II. iv. 366). Both, as Hart remarked, 'may be actors' insertions familiar with the dialogues of the earlier plays in the series.'

378. *How now sweet hart*, &c. The texts are by no means close about here. In the folio it is Page who says to his wife 'How now Meg?' while Page's address to Ford, 'How now man?' is postponed in the folio till after the exit of the women. The reporter is evidently reconstructing from a confused recollection. Mrs. Quickly's entrance, it will be noticed, is marked some lines too early. This would ordinarily be taken as indicating that the text was printed from a prompt copy. Little weight can, however, be attached to an isolated instance, and such an origin is anyhow out of the question in the case of the present quarto.

401-3. *And for . . . Are*. There is certainly a genuine ring about these words, and it is possible that something may have been accidentally omitted from the folio (at II. i. 188).

412. *ramping host*. Presumably a mishearing of the folio 'ranting-Host' (II. i. 196).

433. *Rrooke*, a misprint for *Brooke*. The folio has '*Broome*' throughout, but the pun at l. 543 (II. ii. 157), which is indeed more elaborated in the folio than in the quarto, proves that 'Brook' was the original name and that 'Broom' was for some reason substituted in revision.

439-46. *For sho we be Iustices . . . man of peace*. Here, after a good deal of minor transposition since Shallow's

entrance, occurs a more serious displacement. Two scenes later we find in the folio the following passage (II. iii. 43-53):

*Page.* Master *Shallow*; you haue your selfe beene a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

*Shal.* Body-kins *M. Page*, though I now be old, and of the peace; if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one: though wee are Iustices, and Doctors, and Church-men (*M. Page*) wee haue some salt of our youth in vs, we are the sons of women (*M. Page.*)

*Page.* 'Tis true, *Mr. Shallow.*

*Shal.* It wil be found so, (*M. Page:*) . . .

There is nothing corresponding to this at the later point in the quarto. No reason appears for a transposition in either direction, and the discrepancy is, therefore, most likely due to a trick of the reporter's memory.

457-63. *Come M. Ford . . . Ile follow you.* This passage is interesting, for it would seem that the reporter has transposed what appears as a monologue in the folio into dialogue form. It might, of course, be an instance of revision.

### Scene vi (ll. 465-643) = II. ii.

The opening and close of this scene show close agreement between the texts, but all the middle part is greatly compressed in the quarto. The three divisions are represented in the quarto by 28, 105, and 46 lines, in the folio by 32, 229, and 66 lines, respectively. Much of the central shortening is obviously due to the reporter, who has made various transpositions, and introduced one bad confusion (l. 514). The stage adapter seems, however, also to have been at work on Robin's part (l. 519), and there is some fairly good evidence of revision as well (ll. 467, 537).

467. *I will retort the sum in equipage.* The opening of this scene is very close in the two texts except for one remarkable variation. In place, namely, of the present line the folio reads: 'Why then the world's mine Oyster, which I, with sword will open.' Theobald and some later editors have tried to combine

the texts, producing nonsense. Nevertheless, both readings are unquestionably genuine Shakespeare. I think there can be little doubt that we have to do with a case of revision, but I feel bound to point out another possibility. Suppose the original text to have run :

*Fal.* I will not lend thee a penny.

*Pist.* I will retort the sum in equipage.

*Fal.* Thou retort! thou repay! thou profitless consumption! Hang no more at my girdle, I have nothing for you.

*Pist.* Why then the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open.

*Fal.* Not a penny : . . .

It is obvious that this might give rise to either of the extant texts. To suppose, however, that the folio accidentally omitted the second and third, and the quarto the third and fourth of these speeches, would be to make somewhat unreasonable demands on coincidence.

Hart quotes the quarto reading and adds the note : 'Pistol, it is suggested, meant [by "equipage"] "stuff", probably stolen stuff. The word is somewhat similarly used by Ben Jonson in the mouth of Juniper in *Case is Altered*, IV. iv. [ed. Gifford, vi. 364], 1598, where it means articles of personal adornment. But the expression "in equipage" had some odd usages. See *Eastward Ho*, IV. ii. [Bullen's *Marston*, iii. 89 : 'please you to let us see your straight backs in equipage,' i.e. be off with you], where it seems to mean, "as you go along", making Pistol's sense obvious.' But 'equipage' was frequently confused with the distinct word 'equipace', and I have little doubt that Pistol used it as a fantastic equivalent for 'equity', his sense being 'I will return you the money in all fairness'.

491. *recant.* The folio has 'relent'. The variant is not very easy to explain unless we imagine a confusion on the part of the actor.

492. *away, no more.* One would naturally suppose that Pistol here departs, in spite of a later speech given him in the folio (see l. 537). Lines 501-4, however, constitute a difficulty. Falstaff's remark : 'heeres none but my owne household' would, indeed, be sufficiently justified by the presence of the Boy (cf. l. 519), but Mrs. Quickly's reply,



'Are they so?' necessitates the presence of more than one—consequently of Pistol.

493. *Enter Mistress Quickly.* In the folio she is ushered in by Robin, whose part has been cut as usual. From this point the quarto text becomes a mere condensed summary of the folio, and remains so till the latter part of the scene with Brook, about l. 600.

514-15. *between eight and nine.* The details of these meetings are of some importance in view of the confusion of time-data that exists in both texts. According to the quarto the first meeting is to be between eight and nine (the same morning presumably), 'for then her husband goes a birding'. This is quite unreasonably short notice and we have previously heard nothing of the birding. The second meeting is arranged (l. 987) for 'to morrow sir, between ten and eleuen', nothing being said about Ford. At the second meeting, however, it is explicitly stated that 'He is gone a birding sir *John*' (l. 1148, cf. l. 1165), while no reason is given for his absence at the first meeting. The quarto, therefore, contradicts itself. In the folio, in arranging the first meeting, Mrs. Quickly merely says 'her husband will be absence from his house, between ten and eleuen' (II. ii. 85). Then, at the end of the scene containing the first meeting, Page says to Ford (III. iii. 246): 'I doe inuite you to morrow morning to my house to breakfast: after we'll a Birding together, I haue a fine Hawke for the bush' (cf. quarto, l. 945). Again, in arranging the second meeting Mrs. Quickly's words are: 'her husband goes this morning [should be 'to morrow' as in the quarto] a birding; she desires you once more to come to her, between eight and nine' (III. v. 45), which agrees with the subsequent allusions of both texts. The folio version is therefore the original, and the confusion of the quarto is merely due to the carelessness of the reporter. For the more serious difficulty connected with the second meeting see the notes on sc. xi below.

519. *Boy giue her my purse.* The folio has this later on: 'there's my purse, I am yet thy debter: Boy, goe along with this woman, . . .' (II. ii. 138). Falstaff has his page in the quarto (see ll. 214, 218), but the boy has no speaking part

and the rôle is insignificant. Most likely the part was cut for the stage and given to a super. There is no reason why the reporter should economize in characters, or why a reviser should introduce the part.

537. *Exit Mistress Quickly.* At this point the folio gives a speech by Pistol, who has apparently been watching the scene from afar (II. ii. 141):

This Puncke is one of *Cupids* Carriers,

Clap on more sailes, pursue : vp with your fights :

Giue fire : she is my prize, or Ocean whelme them all.

Whereon Hart comments : 'I imagine this speech of Pistol's was an afterthought, to connect him with the Mrs. Quickly, Pistol's wife, of *Henry V.* Pistol has no business here at all.' In the quarto, he suggests (p. lxii), Pistol leaves the stage at Falstaff's words : 'Well, go too, away, no more' (l. 492), which do not appear in the folio, and is not seen again. This may be the more seemly arrangement, but Hart appears to have overlooked the difficulty with regard to Pistol's exit discussed at l. 492.

538. *Enter Bardolfe.* There are several instances of minor transposition in the earlier part of the ensuing scene, but they are all such as would naturally arise from an attempt to report from memory.

575. *Nay beleene it sir Iohn, for tis time.* We should presumably read 'true' in place of 'time'.

591. *veruensie.* Taken by itself the reading of the quarto would be set down as a mere misprint for 'feruensie'. In view, however, of the folio reading 'vehemency', the accidental substitution of *v* for *f* would be a singular coincidence. I am inclined to think that the reporter wrote 'vemensie' and that the quarto reading is the result of a misreading or emendation on the compositor's part.

596-7. *No sir, . . . I now misdoubt.* The reporter has made havoc of Brooke's argument. Lines 585-90 properly belong here, as in the folio.

598. *Well M. Brooke, &c.* The texts now agree very closely as far as Falstaff's exit. Ford's final speech is a good deal shortened, chiefly by the transference of the devils' names passage, which occurs here in the folio, to l. 1056.

608. *Between 8. and 9.* The folio, of course, has 'betweene ten and eleuen' (see l. 514).

618. *randenowes*, i.e. rendezvous. The folio has 'haruest-home', in the figurative sense of the consummation of a desire. The discrepancy is not very easy to explain. I suppose the reporter misunderstood the use of the word, and connecting it in his mind with a festive gathering paraphrased it by 'rendezvous'.

621. *cuckally knaue*. The folio has 'mechanicall-salt-butter rogue'. The reporter betrays his incompetence by wearisome repetition of the same terms. Strictly, of course, 'cuckally' should be 'cuckaldly' or 'cuckaldy'; the termination may possibly be influenced by 'wittolly'.

### Scene vii (ll. 644-705) = II. iii.

After a quite different opening to this scene, the quarto agrees closely with the folio from mine Host's entrance onward, but for one transposition (l. 668). The Host's part is particularly closely reproduced, and there is some suggestion that the reporter had a special knowledge of his speeches (ll. 661, 696). There is no trace of stage adaptation, but possibly a hint of revision (l. 696).

645-9. *Iohn Ruggie . . . Iohn Rugabie*. These lines are quite different from the more elaborate dialogue of the folio and are presumably the work of the reporter.

659. *francoyes*. The folio has 'Francisco'. 'The Host means "my Frenchman"', says Hart. This inclines me to suppose that the word in the next line, 'gallon,' represented by 'Galien' in the folio, though undoubtedly intended for 'Galen', may not be without a suggestion of 'Gallia'.

661. *bullies taile*. The folio has the correct reading 'bully-Stale' (=urine). The quarto reading, if not a mere misprint, is probably due to an actor's misunderstanding faithfully reproduced by the reporter.

668. *Sir Hugh is a Parson, and you a Phisition*. After this, or its equivalent, the folio has a passage corresponding to ll. 439-46 of the quarto. There is no reason to suppose that the present is not its original position, and its displacement



due to the reporter. Such transpositions are rare when the Host is on the stage, and it should be noticed that the shifting is from one Host-scene to another.

680. *And Ile prouoke, &c.* The prefix *Host* has been accidentally omitted in the quarto.

682-3. *go you all ouer the fields to Frogmore?* The folio is clearly right in reading 'goe you through the Towne to *Frogmore*', for mine Host immediately adds that he will bring the Doctor 'about by the fields'.

696. *And thou shalt wear hir cried game: sed I wel bully.* The folio reads: 'and thou shalt wooe her: Cride-game, said I well?' There are several difficulties in the quarto reading, and it almost looks as though the reporter were reproducing phrases which had been sharply impressed on his memory but which he did not wholly understand. The colon in the folio may be taken as correct and necessary, and its omission in the quarto is perhaps a mere misprint. The quarto reading 'wear' is quite possible in the sense of 'enjoy'—'she shall be thine' (cf. the proverbial phrase 'win and wear', as in *Much Ado*, V. i. 82, and *Euphues*, ed. Bond, ii. 82). Either it represents the original reading later toned down by a reviser, or more likely an actor's coarsened substitute. There remains the crux 'cried game' or 'Cride-game'. Nearly all modern editors have adopted Douce's conjecture 'Cried I aim', and so far as I know Hart stands alone in having subjected the passage to rigorous criticism. He points out that a reading of the folio, supported as this is by the quarto, must be taken as genuine and that we have no right to emend it. For the possible meaning I must refer to Hart's note.

704. *Alon, alon, alon.* This expression ('allons') is peculiar to the quarto and may have originated in a bit of gag.

### Scene viii (ll. 706-786) = III. i.

This scene is substantially the same in the two versions. What compression there is is clearly the work of the reporter, who must also be responsible for one possible transposition (l. 738). There may have been revision in one passage (l. 778).

717. *There dwelt a man in Babylon.* In place of this line from the popular ballad of *Susanna* the folio has '*When as I sat in Pablon*', the first line of the metrical version of the old 137th Psalm. Halliwell remarked that the line from the ballad might easily have been substituted 'if the original sketch was edited from dictation'. Such substitution would be impossible in dictation but most natural in reconstruction from memory.

737. *one*, i.e. his own. '*One*' is recognized as an erroneous form of '*own*', while the omission of the pronoun was idiomatic.

738. *Now Sir Hugh, you are a scholler, &c.* There is nothing corresponding to this passage in the folio, but it resembles one in the scene between Falstaff and Brook (II. ii. 186): '*Sir, I heare you are a Scholler*', &c., which is omitted in the quarto. The resemblance may be accidental; if not the confusion is no doubt due to the reporter.

751-3. *Disarme... English.* In the folio this is all one speech by the Host.

758-9. *for missing your meetings and appointments.* These words are not in the folio and cannot be regarded as absolutely necessary to the sense. They are, however, a distinct help and have figured in modern editions ever since Pope introduced them from the quarto.

773-4. *Giue me thy hand terestiall, So.* In the folio the passage runs: '*No, he giues me the Prouerbes, and the No-verbs. Giue me thy hand (Celestiall) so: Boyes of Art, I haue deceiu'd you both.*' The words of the quarto are absolutely necessary to the sense and were inserted by Pope in the received text. There must have been an accidental mutilation of the folio text at this point, which makes it all the more likely that the same thing happened above.

778. *Bardolfe laie their swords to pawne.* In the folio the passage runs: '*your hearts are mighty, your skinnies are whole, and let burn'd Sacke be the issue: Come, lay their swords to pawne.*' Bardolf is an intruder. The quarto text is so unusually good about here that I hesitate to regard it as seriously corrupt in this passage. There may have been revision owing to the original being regarded as obscure, or else, as I suspect, the actor may have been responsible. I con-

jecture that what mine Host said was 'Bardolph shall lay their swords to pawn' and that he omitted the allusion to burnt sack as being obviously implied in the preceding.

782. *I will be even met you my lack Host.* The first hint of the horse-stealing plot.

### Scene ix (ll. 787-827) = III. ii.

The opening of this scene as it stands in the folio, containing as it does a part for Robin, was presumably cut in the acting version. The portion immediately after the entrance of Page and the rest differs a good deal in the two versions, but as nothing material is gained in the way of compression the variations must be set down to the reporter, who introduces Anne rather clumsily, and is also no doubt responsible for the transposition at l. 818.

791. *guesse*. A common seventeenth-century form of the plural of 'guest', also used by Caius (l. 698, 'gesse') and by the Host (l. 1240).

808. *carise* is, of course, a possible spelling of 'carry't', as the folio reads, but 'betmes' for 'buttons' must surely be due to the inability of the compositor to read his copy.

818-20. *If there be one . . . for shame*. This humorous if rather unsavoury perversion occurs in the folio (without Sir Hugh's rejoinder) in a later scene (III. iii. 250). It fits either passage equally and its appearance here is presumably due to the reporter, while the underlining of the jest, as it were, may be no more than actors' gag.

### Scene x (ll. 828-951) = III. iii.

As Hart observes (p. xxiii) the quarto text becomes more careless from about this point on, and confusion and transposition become frequent. Robin appears at the opening of the present scene in the folio, and as usual the part involving his presence is cut in the quarto, presumably for the stage. The folio also contains directions to the servants as to the bestowal of Falstaff, which do not appear in the quarto. Since the plot might be all the more effective on the stage for the audience



being kept in the dark till the knight's subsequent appearance, it is possible to ascribe the omission to the stage adapter, though there is obviously no necessity to do so. From Falstaff's entry the quarto follows the folio fairly regularly (omitting Robin again at III. iii. 100) but with violent compression. At l. 925 we get a hint that this is due to the reporter, while his usual transpositions are found at ll. 883, 911, 919.

838. *Haue I caught my heauenlie Iewel?* The folio gives this line in the form: 'Haue I caught thee, my heauenly Iewel?' It is a quotation from Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (second song, ed. Grosart, 1873, i. 77), and it is to be remarked that the quarto gives the line correctly.

850. *sire vellet*. 'Vellet' was a form of 'velvet', but in the present instance the compositor probably misread his copy: 'valiant'—if that reading of the folio is correct.

875. *Speak louder*. This graphic aside evidently struck the mind of the reporter, and he introduced it at the first opportunity, though it properly belongs to the subsequent meeting (folio, IV. ii. 17), when according to the folio Falstaff has retired to another chamber. Hart rightly emphasizes the greater propriety of the folio arrangement.

883-4. *Better any shift, rather than you shamed*. The corresponding passage in the folio (III. iii. 136): 'Oh, how haue you deceiu'd me?' is better in keeping with the rôle. The words in the quarto may be a duplication of Falstaff's subsequent expression, 'any extremitie, rather then a mischiefe' (IV. ii. 74, cf. l. 1167).

907. *Exit omnes*—that is, all who entered at l. 895 (cf. l. 922).

911-12. *we cannot use Him bad enough*. Corresponding to the folio, IV. ii. 104: 'We cannot misuse enough.'

915-16. *But this . . . loue increase*. The reporter's attempt at introducing rime has not left much sense remaining.

917. *Nay we wil send to Falstaffe once again*. The folio makes Mrs. Page say (III. iii. 209): 'let him be sent for to morrow eight a clocke to haue amends,' which anticipates the arrangements which ensure Ford's being absent at that hour (iii. 245).

919-21. *What wines . . . all the draffe.* These lines are again borrowed from a later scene, where the folio has (IV. ii. 106):

We'll leaue a prooffe by that which we will doo,  
Wiues may be merry, and yet honest too:  
We do not acte that often, iest, and laugh,  
'Tis old, but true, Still Swine eats all the draugh.

It may be mentioned that Q<sub>2</sub> added 'so' to l. 918 in order to make a rime with l. 919.

925-6. *Did you heare . . . peace.* These remarks lose their point in the quarto owing to the omission above of Mrs. Ford's remark: 'I thinke my husband hath some speciall suspition of *Falstaffs* being heere' (folio, III. iii. 199). This points to the reporter, not the stage-adapter, being responsible for the shortening of this scene.

931. *You serue me well, do you not?* The prefix *Mis. For.* has been omitted before these words.

945. *dinner*, an obvious slip for 'breakfast' as in the folio.

951. *Exit omnes.* Before the characters leave the stage the folio inserts another allusion to the horse-stealing plot (III. iii. 255):

*Eua.* I pray you now remembrance to morrow on the lowsie knaue, mine Host.

*Cai.* Dat is good by gar, withall my heart.

*Eua.* A lousie knaue, to haue his gibes, and his mockeries.

### Scene xi (ll. 952-1067) = III. v.

We here come at once to the most important transposition in the arrangement of the quarto text and to the most serious crux in the time indications of the play, and it is not impossible that the two may be related. According to Daniel, sc. xii is misplaced in the quarto and should, as in the folio, come between scs. x and xi, but his reason, that time must be given for Falstaff to get home, is not very cogent. In the folio the order is fixed by Mrs. Quickly's remark at the end of III. iv (= sc. xii): 'Well, I must of another errand to Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*,' but these words are omitted in the quarto.

It has, of course, always been a matter of comment that in the present scene, as it stands in the folio, the indications of time are inextricably confused. Falstaff enters from his ducking and is immediately greeted by Mrs. Quickly, who informs him that Ford 'goes this morning a birding' and that his wife 'desires you once more to come to her, betweene eight and nine' (III. v. 46-7), while later on Brook observes: 'Tis past eight already Sir' (v. 135). Various and violent emendations have been proposed, but the only result has been to hide, not to remove, the difficulty. However the confusion arose, whether through sheer carelessness on the author's part, or through some clumsy attempt to amalgamate two distinct scenes for stage presentation, it is inherent in the text as we have it and no superficial tinkering will avail.

It will be noticed that the contradiction, though equally present, is somewhat less in evidence in the quarto. 'And sir,' says Mrs. Quickly, 'she would desire you of all loues you will meet her once again, to morrow sir, betweene ten and eleuen' (l. 985). Later on, however, Brook says (l. 1047): 'Why sir, tis almost ten already' (for the discrepancy of hours see l. 514). Two possibilities are open to conjecture. Either the folio represents the earlier text and the quarto an attempt at correction (the adapter or reporter having brought Mrs. Quickly's remarks into agreement with the opening of the scene, and in so doing made them clash with the close); or else the folio represents an attempted emendation of the original (the reviser having brought Mrs. Quickly's remarks into agreement with Brook's, forgetting that this made havoc of the opening). I shall argue in a moment in favour of the former of these alternatives.

It has been said by Daniel (p. viii) that 'The confusion may be easily cured in the Q<sup>e</sup> edition by simply drawing a line between the Falstaff-Quickly portion of the scene and the Falstaff-Ford portion'. This is perfectly true—as far as the scene itself is concerned. But it will not cure the confusion, for it leaves Brook's visit to take place the following morning. Now, at their first interview Falstaff repeatedly directed Brook to 'Come to me soone at night' (ll. 610, 628, cf. II. ii. 277,



299), and, moreover, if Ford had not *already* had notice of Falstaff's visit, he would, at the hour he is represented as calling on him, have actually been breakfasting with Page.

The impossibility of removing the confusion, owing to data outside the scene itself, seems to negative the idea that the difficulty is due to the amalgamation of two scenes into one, and forces us to the conclusion that it is really inherent in the composition. If so, it seems more reasonable to suppose that the Folio text, in which the contradiction is the more violent, is the original, since it is more likely that a reviser or adapter should seek to remove an obvious difficulty than that he should happen to fall into the same error as the original author. Moreover, there is the change in the order of the scenes. It is just possible that the adapter or reporter responsible for the quarto version, feeling the contradiction, perceived, like Daniel, that it could be removed, as far as the actual scene was concerned, by splitting it in two, that when he omitted III. iv at l. 951 he intended to insert it after l. 996, and that when he arrived at that point he either forgot about it, or else, perceiving that it would not really mend matters, postponed it to the place where it now stands.

For these reasons I believe that the folio represents the text substantially as Shakespeare wrote it, and the quarto an unskilful adaptation.

Of course the confusion is not actually in the structure of the play but only in the text and can be cured by the adoption of sufficiently drastic methods. Mrs. Quickly's speech must be given in the form in which it appears in the quarto (which harmonizes with folio, III. iv. 113), and in the Brook portion ll. 1047-9 ('Why sir . . . appointment=III. v. 134-5) must be omitted. This would be the proper course for a stage-manager to pursue: it is not open to an editor.

The scene offers few points of interest in detail. The reporter is seen in two transpositions (ll. 996, 1057), and is no doubt responsible for the compression of the middle portion. The compositor must be credited with two patent blunders (ll. 964, 971), while several small discrepancies between the texts are presumably due to a Jacobean 'reformer' (ll. 962, 998, 1020).

953. Two orders for drink that appear in the folio text (III. v. 3, 29) are here reduced to one.

957-9. *Haue I lined . . . Butchers offoll.* The folio has: 'Haue I liu'd to be carried in a Basket like a barrow of butcher's Offall? and to be throwne in the Thames?' Hart points out that in either case 'barrow' means 'barrowful', and that the folio reading is, therefore, quite possible. It remains, however, though perhaps original, extremely clumsy, and that of the quarto is a natural emendation.

964. *in the litter.* The word 'fifteen', preserved in the folio, has evidently dropped out before this phrase.

971. *money* is evidently a compositor's error for 'Mummie', as in the folio.

978. *Enter Mistresse Quickly.* So far the texts are in close agreement. The interview with Mrs. Quickly is much condensed in the quarto, the text having been reconstructed by the reporter round a few phrases that stuck in his memory. For the discrepancy as to hours see l. 514.

996. *I will not faile. Commend me to her.* The folio here reads (III. v. 56): 'Well, be gone: I will not misse her.' The words of the quarto are a repetition from II. ii. 95: 'Woman, commend me to her, I will not faile her' (cf. ll. 518-19).

999. *Enter Brooke.* With the Ford interview the two texts again become closer, in spite of the violent condensation to which Falstaff's longest speech (ll. 1030-9=III. v. 96-124) has been subjected.

1057-61. *And a man . . . hath not such a name.* These remarks are transferred from the close of the former interview where the folio reads (II. ii. 307): 'and I shall not onely receiue this villanous wrong, but stand vnder the adoption of abhominable terms, and by him that does mee this wrong: Termes, names: *Amaimon* sounds well: *Lucifer*, well: *Barbason*, well: yet they are Diuels additions, the names of fiends: But Cuckold, Wittoll, Cuckold? the Diuell himself hath not such a name.'

## Scene xii (ll. 1068-1139) = III. iv.

It will be noticed that the first two speeches of the quarto text form just such a conversation as is implied by Fenton's opening words in the folio :

I see I cannot get thy Fathers loue,  
Therefore no more turne me to him (sweet Nan).

It looks, at first sight, as though Shakespeare, in revising his play, had cut out the very weak passage in the quarto and substituted these two lines. It must, however, be remembered that there is here no question of the original draft—if such existed—having been by any hand but Shakespeare's, and that it is difficult to imagine how a single one of the first ten lines of the quarto text could come from his pen. They can only represent Shakespeare as rewritten by some literary hack. But in that case it is just as easy to suppose that the reporter, with but a vague recollection of the scene in his mind, began the conversation at the beginning instead of plunging into the midst of it as Shakespeare did. Such a proceeding is of a piece with his subsequent performance. The chief difference between the texts of the latter part of the scene lies in the fact that in the quarto Page and his wife, Shallow and Slender all enter together, and that, after the passage between Fenton and the parents, the latter go out leaving Shallow and Slender to talk with Anne; whereas in the folio Shallow and Slender enter first and converse with Anne while Fenton talks with Mrs. Quickly, and the parents only enter subsequently. There is thus a good deal of transposition, and the quarto arrangement necessitates at least one speech (ll. 1102-4) not found in the folio. There is also a great deal of minor transposition in the Shallow and Slender portion which can only be properly shown by parallel texts, and of violent compression in the Page-Fenton portion. There is nothing to suggest that in these later changes we have to reckon with any one but the reporter.

1086. *Enter M. Page, &c.* Immediately before this in the folio occurs the passage which forms ll. 81-6 (in sc. i) of the quarto text.



1116-17. *All this is nought, harke you mistresse Anne.* These words presumably belong to the following speech by Shallow.

1133. *Ile giue you more then Ile talke of.* This remark is apparently a reminiscence of folio, III. ii. 57: 'I would not breake with her for more money Then Ile speake of.'

### Scene xiii (ll. 1140-1231) = IV. ii.

The scene which opens the fourth act of the folio version has nothing corresponding to it in the quarto. It supplied Rossetti with the motto of one of his most remarkable poems, but its omission is certainly no loss to the play. It introduces Mrs. Page's young son, William, and was, no doubt, for that and other reasons, omitted from the stage adaptation.

Sc. xiii is much compressed in the quarto, but the work has been done with some intelligence. An apparent attempt at brisking up the action would suggest the stage adapter, were it not that the omission by which the presentation gains most seems on other grounds referable to the reporter (l. 1181). A few minor transpositions (e.g. l. 1197) and the clumsy opening (l. 1145) are also doubtless his handiwork.

1140. *Enter misteris Ford and her two men.* The directions to the servants are given in the folio when the latter actually enter to take the basket (IV. ii. 110). That is obviously their correct place, for the object of the basket is to fool the jealous husband, and his wife has no reason at the opening of the scene to suppose that he will be present. Whoever was responsible for the transposition forgot that on both occasions Mrs. Page arranged to bring news of Ford's approach in jest, and on both occasions was forced to bring it in earnest. The humiliation prepared for Falstaff on his second visit is that of being sent through the streets of Windsor disguised as an old woman. The success of this device really depends upon his meeting Ford, who has a particular objection to fat witches, but it is evident from the folio (IV. ii. 86, &c.) that it had been prepared without that expectation.

1145. *Enter Syr Iohn.* Here again (as in sc. xii) the reporter endeavours to represent a conversation from the

beginning, whereas Shakespeare, far more effectively, introduces us into the very middle of it. In this instance the proceeding was necessitated by the previous transposition.

1175. *Gillian of Brainford*. The folio only calls her 'mother Prat' (IV. ii. 191), 'the fat [or 'old'], woman of Brainford' (ii. 77, 87), 'the witch of Brainford' (ii. 100). It is doubtful whether Shakespeare intended to identify her with the notorious old Jyll whose obscene 'Testament' was printed by William Copland. The mention of Brainford, or Brentford, would, however, inevitably suggest this character, and the reporter—if not the actor—appears to have boldly inserted her name. The question is fully discussed by Hart (p. xlviii).

1181. *Exit Mis. Page, & Sir Iohn*. In the folio Falstaff goes off first, and there follow several speeches between the two wives. They tend to develop the situation, but are not essential to its comprehension, and tend to make the action drag. They might conceivably be cut out by a stage-adapter. It should, however, be observed that their omission practically necessitates the removal of the directions to the servants to their present illogical position (l. 1140), also that the couplets (IV. ii. 106-9) occur in a mutilated form in the quarto on the occasion of the first appointment (ll. 919-21). Neither of these transpositions make the suggestion of a stage adaptation exactly impossible, but it must be admitted that they are both very much more after the manner of the reporter.

1185. *How now whither goe you? Ha whither go you?* Repeated from the first basket-scene (l. 898=III. iii. 63). The folio merely has: 'Set downe the basket villaine.'

1188. *What is the reason that you use me thus?* There is nothing corresponding to this line in the folio version; but curiously enough it occurs, as Daniel pointed out, in *Hamlet* (1604 and folio), V. i. 312. In the earlier *Hamlet* quarto (1603, sc. xvi, l. 163) it runs: 'What is the reason sir that you wrong me thus?' The line must have been introduced into the *Merry Wives* either by the actor or the reporter, and in either case its appearance proves that in this particular at least the version of *Hamlet* which held the stage in 1601-2 agreed with the later and not the earlier text.

1197-1201. *You youth in a basket . . . in these fits.* There is a good deal of shuffling as well as compression in these speeches.

1211. *A witch, &c.* The speaker's name—*For*.—has been accidentally omitted before these words.

1223. *Exit omnes*, that is, all those who entered at l. 1182 (cf. l. 907).

#### Scene xiv (ll. 1232-1242) = IV. iii.

This short scene, the first fragment of the horse-stealing plot, is almost verbally the same in the two texts. There seems no reason to suppose that it has undergone alteration like the rest of the scenes devoted to that episode.

1234. *the Stanger* (not in the folio), doubtless a misprint for 'the stranger' (as in Q<sub>2</sub>), i.e. the foreigner. The folio has 'Germane' (modern editions, 'Germans') in place of 'Gentlemen'.

#### Scene xv (ll. 1243-1300) = IV. iv.

In this scene, while the substance of the two texts is the same, the language hardly even presents points of contact. The quarto is much compressed. If this is due to the reporter, nowhere previously has he rewritten a scene so entirely and so boldly. That a good deal of the discrepancy is due to him is obvious, but the rimed lines at the end of the scene are better than his attempts elsewhere and might possibly be due to an adapter. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the folio text may represent a reconstruction of later date. Some alteration in this portion of the play almost certainly occurred in connexion with the horse-stealing plot. It is true that what remains of that plot is substantially the same in the two texts, but it is possible that, when alteration became necessary, all that was done to the stage version was to excise certain passages, while in the full version the mutilations were disguised by a reconstruction and expansion of the neighbouring portions. That the work was clumsily done seems evident, and is witnessed by the number of passages in



which editors have at different times sought to emend the folio by the help of the quarto text.

1260-2. *Let me alone . . . come or not.* The corresponding speech in the folio occurs a good deal later (IV. iv. 76). Ford carries out his intention in the first scene of the fifth act, which is omitted in the quarto.

1264. *Heave my deuce.* In the folio, Mrs. Page having told the tale of Herne the hunter, Page asks: 'But what of this?' whereupon Mrs. Ford replies: 'Marry this is our deuse, That *Falstaffe* at that Oake shall meete with vs,' omitting the point that he is to be disguised as Herne. This, Hart argues, is implied in the subsequent conversation—Page says: 'And in this shape, when you haue brought him thither'—but what is really implied is that the suggestion has already been made. Hart and the Cambridge editors are right in disallowing as illegitimate Theobald and Malone's attempt to tack l. 1271 of the quarto on to Mrs. Ford's speech as given in the folio (the two texts not being parallel), but Hart seems clearly wrong in disputing the view of the Cambridge editors that the folio text is defective.

1265. *Horne*, cf. 1271, 1442, 1453, 1519. The folio throughout has *Herne*, no doubt rightly, the quarto form being an obvious corruption.

1281. *And in that Maske, &c.* From this point on there are numerous minor transpositions and discrepancies, obviously due to reconstruction from memory. In the folio Mrs. Page does not explain how the Doctor is to possess himself of her daughter, but merely at the end of the scene announces her intention of going to see him. Lines 1293-4 properly belong to an earlier portion of the scene (IV. iv. 20) and to Evans.

1294-1300. Note that these last six lines rime. There is nothing corresponding in the folio, except an altogether different couplet at the end of Mrs. Page's soliloquy after the rest have left the stage. The rime in ll. 1294-5 is connected with the transposition noticed above (ll. 1293-4), but the rest at any rate might be original.

## Scene xvi (ll. 1301-1397)=IV. v.

This scene presents some peculiarities. The opening conversation with mine Host is almost verbally the same in the two texts. So in the scene between Falstaff and Simple except for the omission in the quarto of the most important part of it. Then comes a change. The horse-stealing passage is badly mangled in the quarto, mine Host's speeches being as much corrupted as the rest. This fact, of prime importance for the history of the text, is fully discussed below. Falstaff's soliloquy is shortened in the quarto by a portion being transferred to l. 1546; but the quarto nevertheless corrects the folio at l. 1376. The scene with Mrs. Quickly is substantially the same in the two texts.

1305. *theres his Castle.* I suspect, though nobody seems to have noticed it before, that there is here an allusion to the original name of the character we know as Falstaff. So in 1 *Henry IV* (I. ii. 47) the Prince calls Falstaff 'my old Lad of the Castle'. The name had been changed from Oldcastle to Falstaff before 25 Feb. 1598, but we know that the old name persisted in common use as late as 1600 (Malone Society Collections, i. 111), and there is no improbability in supposing that a theatrical audience would understand an allusion to it even as late as 1602.

1333. *Cousoned him of it.* After this the folio has a further question about Anne. Daniel mentioned this passage as one of those that prove mutilation in the quarto text. I cannot regard the particular argument upon which he relied (the absurdity namely of *Slender's* reply in the quarto) as cogent, but his conclusion was doubtless correct, for in the quarto there is no point whatever in *Slender's* visit. There is not very much in the folio, but it is just possible that his appearance here may be due to his having played some part in the original horse-stealing plot.

1335. *I tike, who more bolde*, presumably a misprint for 'I, like who', &c. The folio has: 'I Sir: like who more bold.' It should, however, be remarked that in *Henry V* (II. i. 28) Pistol addresses Bardolph as 'Base Tyke' ('Base slaue' in the quarto).

1344-71. *Enter Bardolfe . . . Exit [Host]*. Here is the second and main fragment of the horse-stealing plot. A careful comparison of the texts makes it clear that the original passage was substantially as in the folio, the discrepancies being due to corruption in the quarto text. This corruption is, however, very extensive, and contrary to what we have learned to expect from previous scenes, it extends equally to the speeches of the Host. I have little doubt that the explanation is that the whole passage is a later substitution for the original suppressed scene, and that the actor who played the part of the Host never troubled to learn the new part properly. Very likely the insertion was merely read over in the tiring-house and never properly worked into the parts at all.

1349. *Maidenhead*. The folio has 'Eaton', which is more likely. There was no occasion to carry Bardolph as far as Maidenhead; moreover, Slough (if a pun is intended in l. 1350) is beyond Eton, not beyond Maidenhead.

1351-69. *Enter Doctor . . . Exit. Enter Sir Hugh . . . Exit*. The appearances of Caius and Evans (ll. 1351-9 and 1360-9) occur in the opposite order in the folio (IV. v. 75-91). There seems no reason for this transposition in the quarto, except the reporter's habitual carelessness, but it is presumably responsible for the truly astounding perversion at l. 1370.

1357. *Branford*. The third place mentioned in the folio (by Evans) is 'Cole-brooke'. It will be observed that in the quarto the Doctor merely anticipates what Sir Hugh has to say as to the Host's being cozened. In the folio he far more appropriately warns his victim that nothing is known at Court as to the arrival of any German duke. The quarto throughout this passage presents an obviously debased text.

1364. *cosen garmombles*. The folio reads: 'Cozen-Iermans.' The question whether 'cosen garmombles' is or is not an inversion of 'our cousin Mumpellgart', as Elizabeth called her persistent suitor for the honour of the Garter, has been debated by editors at a length and with an erudition which make emulation vain. I would only call attention to one point. I have been forced above to the conclusion (l. 1344) that the whole of this passage is unoriginal, being a substitution for a more elaborate scene which had for some reason to be cut



out. Moreover, of this substituted passage the authoritative text is preserved in the folio. It is therefore unreasonable to suppose that the quarto, which is particularly corrupt at this point, can retain original readings which have been revised in the folio. If 'garmombles' is anything but a wild blunder of the compositor, it must be, not a fragment of the original text, but a sly allusion to the censored episode introduced by the actor (an Elizabethan Pelissier) for the benefit of an audience familiar with current dramatic scandal. I do not think that it has been observed as it should that in this passage the quarto is curiously persistent in giving the Host his full title of 'mine Host of the Garter'.

1369. *grate why*. I cannot omit to quote Hart's ingenious note on this phrase, which occurs only in the quarto. 'I have not,' he says, 'seen any note on these words "grate why"'. No doubt they are Welsh, and the letter "r" is a misprint. They mean "bless you", or "preserve you" (*cadw chwi*), as I judge from the expression "Du cat a whee" (God bless you), which is dealt with by Nares. . . . It is pleasant, if I am right, to find one Welsh expression in Evans' mouth, the only one, I believe, in Shakespeare.'

1370. *I am cosened Hugh, and coy Bardolfe*. The reading of the folio text (IV. v. 92): 'Huy and cry, (villaine) goe,' allows us to emend this strange nonsense into: 'I am cosened! hu and cry, *Bardolfe*!' The quarto reading as it stands is probably no more than a perversely ingenious conjecture on the part of a compositor unable to read his copy.

1376. *to say my prayers*. These words, which seem absolutely necessary to the sense and are undoubtedly genuine, are absent from the folio text, though inserted from the quarto in all modern editions.

### Scene xvii (ll. 1398-1435) = IV. vi.

In spite of the rather drastic compression to which this scene has been subjected in the quarto, it retains all the essential information. The quarto preserves one speech by the Host not found in the folio (l. 1424), but it is too slight to be significant.

1399. *Speake not to me sir, &c.* These opening lines supply the last direct reference to the horse-stealing plot, and add nothing to our knowledge of it.

1411. *Wherein fat Falstaffe had a mightie scare.* Both texts here present difficulties, and some modern editors have followed Malone in his quite illegitimate attempt to emend the folio from the quarto—the context and construction being quite different in the two texts. The folio version, though abrupt and unmetrical, is probably substantially correct (IV. vi. 12-18):

I haue a letter from her  
Of such contents, as you will wonder at ;  
The mirth wherof, so larded with my matter,  
That neither (singly) can be manifested  
Without the shew of both : fat *Falstaffe*  
Hath a great Scene ; the image of the iest  
Ile show you here at large . . .

In the quarto it looks at first as though l. 1411 were a fragment that had got out of place, but when, with the help of the folio, we have emended it to :

Wherin fat *Falstaffe* hath a mightie scene,  
it appears to be a not impossible parenthetical clause depending on 'night' in the previous line.

1412. *Catlen*, doubtless a printer's error for '*Eaton*' as in the folio.

1429-30. *And bring her . . . there be married.* Hart speaks disrespectfully of the corresponding lines in the folio (IV. vi. 50-1):

And in the lawfull name of marrying,  
To giue our hearts vnited ceremony,

and elsewhere (p. xvi) suggests that this long speech of Fenton's may be due to stage adaptation. Be this as it may, there is nothing in the quarto to suggest that the text upon which it was based differed in any way from that preserved in the folio so far as the present scene is concerned.

## Scene xviii (ll. 1436-1624) = V. v.

The first four scenes of the fifth act of the folio text are bodily omitted in the quarto. Nothing would be lost on the stage by their excision, but, in view of past experience, ll. 1437-8 should make us hesitate to ascribe their absence to adaptation.

The long final scene is greatly compressed in the quarto text, which, indeed, goes almost entirely to pieces. It shows every sign of mutilation and corruption, being evidently a rough reconstruction from memory, on the whole looser and more careless than any other portion of the play. Yet in spite of this it shows evident signs of going back to an original different from the folio text, and one, moreover, intended for a different audience (ll. 1473, 1492). It may also conceivably contain genuine fragments which have been erased from the folio text (ll. 1561-2). The latter has pretty certainly been subjected to revision at some date, and may even have been contaminated by actors' gag (cf. l. 1484).

1437-8. *This is the third time . . . old [Q<sub>2</sub> odde] numbers.* In the folio V. i opens with Falstaff's words: 'Pre'thee no more prating: go, Ile hold, this is the third time: I hope good lucke lies in odde numbers.' There being no reason why an adapter should have transferred them to this place, their appearance must be due to the reporter, whence it follows that V. i at least must have formed part of the acting version. Daniel argued that the lines are out of place in the quarto since 'Falstaff is awkwardly made to say that he *will* venture when he has actually done so'. But this is unconvincing. Falstaff coming on to the stage before meeting the wives might quite naturally say that he will risk yet another encounter with them.

1456-8. *Enter sir Hugh . . . and afterward speake.* Unlike the quarto and unlike modern editions, the folio has the simple direction '*Enter Fairies*'. On the other hand we get a full list of the characters who appear in the course of the scene in the initial direction, which runs: '*Enter Falstaffe, Mistris Page, Mistris Ford, Euans, Anne Page, Fairies, Page, Ford, Quickly, Slender, Fenton, Caius, Pistoll.*' There is no sort of order in this list; the characters who appear among



the Fairies must be : Evans, Anne, Quickly, Pistol. Evans, of course, is there in his own character ; he announces his intention of appearing as 'Iackanapes' (l. 1290, IV. iv. 67), he is 'that wealch Fairie' (l. 1484, V. v. 85), answers in the quarto to the name of 'Puck' (l. 1465), and according to the direction of the same text is dressed 'like a Satyre' (l. 1456). Anne also is present, though neither text gives her a part, which would, indeed, be inappropriate. Pistol has several speeches assigned to him in the folio, but, as Daniel saw, all that this means is that the actor who played the part of Pistol reappeared in the character of a fairy (see, however, V. v. 87 and note to l. 1484). There remains Mrs. Quickly, who, the quarto explicitly informs us, filled the part of the 'Queen of Fayries'. Her speeches have the prefix 'Quic.' in the quarto, 'Qu.' or 'Qui.' in the folio. Of course, the part of Mrs. Quickly was filled by a boy, and all we are entitled to assume is that the same boy acted the Queen of Fairies. This is proved by the fact that, as we shall see later on (l. 1511), Slender abducts the Fairy Queen, supposing her to be Anne, and she turns out to be, not Mrs. Quickly, but the Postmaster's boy (V. v. 211). Many editors have been very properly shocked at the idea of Mrs. Quickly taking the part of the Fairy Queen, but they have fallen into a far worse error in giving the rôle to Anne ! The part of Queen is just the one part which Anne cannot possibly take if she is to make good her escape with Fenton.

1473-8. *Where is Pead? go you & see where Brokers sleep . . . plew and red.* These lines, which differ entirely from the corresponding passage in the folio beginning (V. v. 53):

Wher's Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid . . .

are certainly not the invention of the reporter, but prove that the quarto here goes back to a text different from the folio, and one moreover adapted to the palate of a London audience. The allusion to the Garter in the folio text was presumably intended for Court consumption only.

1484. *that wealch Fairie.* It should be observed that the folio has no trace of dialect in Sir Hugh's fairy speeches, and the quarto but few. This is mere carelessness on the

scribe's or actor's part, since Falstaff at once recognizes his nationality. After this line the folio inserts (V. v. 87):

*Pist.* Vilde worme, thou wast ore-look'd euen in thy birth.

There may be a touch of Pistol's humour here, but if so it is most likely due to a bit of actor's gag having crept into the text in the course of the revision to which this scene has almost certainly been subjected.

1492-1503. *Go strait, and do . . . loue ventry.* This is another passage, which it is impossible to ascribe to the reporter, but which differs entirely from the folio, which reads (V. v. 88):

*Qu.* With Triall-fire touch me his finger end:  
If he be chaste, the flame will backe descend  
And turne him to no paine: but if he start,  
It is the flesh of a corrupted hart.

*Pist.* A triall, come.

*Eua.* Come: will this wood take fire?

It is clear that the double character of this scene extends beyond the actual speeches addressed to Court and City respectively: there must have been two sensibly divergent redactions. The curious part of the matter is that neither bears much trace of Shakespeare's hand. One is, indeed, almost forced to the conclusion that if Shakespeare ever completed the play, his work in the last act at least has almost disappeared under a two-fold revision by a greatly inferior playwright. How the original plot solved itself it would be fascinating to know: at present all we can say with any degree of certainty is that the stolen horses presumably played a prominent part.

1511-18. *Here they pinch him . . . Sir Hugh.* The folio gives the song but not the stage direction. And here we must try to unravel the considerable confusion which surrounds the elopement of Mistress Anne. The crux of the matter is the colour of her dress. Let us first take the data supplied by the folio. (a) IV. iv. 71: Mrs. Page says in her husband's hearing: 'My *Nan* shall be the Queene of all the Fairies, finely attired in a robe of white.' The Queen, therefore, is to be dressed in white, and on this the simple Page counts.

(b) IV. vi. 20, 35, 41: Fenton tells mine Host that 'Her Father means she shall be all in white' and that so 'Must my sweet *Nan* present the *Faerie-Queene*', but that her mother intends, on the contrary, 'That quaint in greene, she shall be loose en-roab'd, With Ribonds-pendant, flaring 'bout her head.' That is to say that Mrs. Page, having publicly announced that her daughter is to wear white, takes the precaution—Anne having presumably betrayed her father's plot—of putting her in green. Since Anne intends to deceive both her parents it is clear that she must not wear either white or green, or play the part of the Queen of Fairies. (c) V. ii. 10: Page says to Slender: 'The white will decipher her well enough.' (d) V. iii. 1: Mrs. Page says to Caius: 'my daughter is in green.' It follows, therefore, that Slender is to carry off the *Queen of Fairies* in *white*, and Caius one of the other fairies 'loose en-roab'd' in *green*. (e) V. v. 208, 213, 221: Slender, taxed by Page with having made a mistake, says: 'I went to her in greene' ('white' in modern editions), whereupon Mrs. Page explains that she had 'turn'd my daughter into white' ('green' in modern editions), and asks Caius: 'did you take her in white?' ('green' in modern editions). The data of this scene contradict what has gone before. They are clearly due to confusion and should be corrected. Anne herself perhaps wore red (cf. quarto, l. 1512), or else may have been dressed as a boy. The 'Post-masters Boy' (V. v. 199) was dressed as a girl in white and played the Queen, another boy (conceivably Will Page) was dressed as a girl in green to the confusion of Caius.

Let us now examine the quarto. (a) Line 1285: Page announces in his wife's hearing: 'in a robe of white Ile cloath my daughter,' nothing being said as to her playing the Queen. (b) Lines 1410, 1415, 1426: Fenton says: 'in a robe of white this night disguised . . . Must *Slender* take her'—again no mention of her rôle—further that her mother will put her 'in a robe of red', but he himself will know her 'by a robe of white, the which she wears, With ribones pendant flaring bout her head'. Now the ribands are tacked on to her by mistake, we know that they belong to the green dress of the



folio, here called red, so that if Anne were to follow Fenton's plan she would simply be throwing herself into the arms of Slender. Here then the quarto is manifestly in error. (c) and (d) are, of course, absent from the quarto. We have therefore to suppose that the arrangements allot to Slender a boy in white, to Caius a boy in red, and to Fenton Mistress Anne presumably in green. Now we come to the stage direction of the quarto, in which the reporter has endeavoured to record what actually took place on the stage. It will be noticed that both the dupes are described as carrying off boys, which is, of course, correct, but must not be taken to mean that they were so dressed. Slender, we are told, steals a green boy, Caius a red (correctly), and Fenton a white Anne. This agrees neither with the previous quarto nor folio data, and must be the result of confusion. The reporter would hardly see which was which on the stage, and no doubt wrote the direction to suit his own very muddled ideas of the plot. (e) Line 1588: to make matters worse we find Slender saying: 'I came to her in red as you bad me'—Caius makes no mention of the colour. The quarto further suggests (l. 1574) that it was Page, and not his wife, who changed Anne's colour (cf. V. v. 213), but this is merely due to a change necessitated by a quite meaningless inversion, and cannot be taken seriously.

The result is that the data of the quarto are throughout confused and corrupt. There is, however, no evidence that the underlying scheme is not that of the folio. This is by far the most elaborate (except for the omission of the stage direction) and, but for the easily corrected errors of act V, is entirely consistent. The only service rendered by the quarto is the record of the third colour—red—presumably worn by Anne (the folio nowhere mentions her colour; the quarto gives her white, which is one she cannot possibly be allowed).

1522. *the mad Prince of Wales*. This reference to Prince Harry was no doubt in the play as performed, but it may quite conceivably have been introduced by an actor.

1526. *Sir Hu*. Modern editions follow the stage-direction of the quarto in making all the fairies leave the stage (l. 1515), forgetting that Evans has to reappear. The quarto itself marks his re-entry, presumably without his disguise (l. 1518).

1530. *M. Brooke*. In the folio Ford harps insistently on Master Brook (or Broom as he is there called), ending: 'and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to Mr *Broome*, his horses are arrested for it, Mr *Broome*.' As Hart acutely observes, the reference must be to II. i. 98, where Mrs. Page proposes to her gossip that they should egg Falstaff on 'till hee hath pawn'd his horses to mine Host of the Garter'. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that these are the very horses of which mine Host was robbed, but in the mutilated state in which that plot has come down to us it is impossible to speak with confidence.

1544-5. *yet the grosnesse Of the fopperie perswaded me they were*. This is nonsense. The reporter has recollected a few words of the original and twisted them to a precisely opposite meaning. The folio reads (V. v. 130): 'yet the guiltinesse of my minde, the sodaine surprize of my powers, droue the grossnesse of the foppery into a receiu'd beleefe.'

1546-9. *Well, and the fine wits . . . out of my grease*. This passage is a corruption of a portion of a speech of Falstaff which occurs in the folio at the end of the chief horse-stealing scene (IV. v. 96-103).

1554-5. *Am I ridden . . . With a peece of toasted cheese?* What a picture! (Angels on horseback?) The folio gives the correct phrase (V. v. 146): 'Tis time I were choak'd with a peece of toasted Cheese.'

1556-7. *Butter is better . . . butter, butter*. Again a miserable perversion of the correct reading preserved in the folio: 'Seese is not good to giue putter; your belly is al putter.'

1559-60. *There's 20. pound . . . to M. Ford Sir Iohn*. There is a parallel allusion to Broom at this point in the folio (V. v. 174), but the substance of the present remark is transferred from the earlier passage (v. 117).

1561-2. *Nay husband . . . all be friends*. There is nothing corresponding to this in the folio. The occurrence of the remark in connexion with Brook's twenty pounds suggests that it may have had some bearing on the horse-stealing episode.

1566-77. *Enter the Doctor . . . Enter Slender*. The order of these entrances is reversed in the folio. That the folio is correct appears from the fact that the quarto has to make

Page (l. 1573) aware of his wife's plot and himself the counterminer, whereas the whole details of the colour-device (cf. l. 1511) imply the reverse, as stated in the folio (V. v. 213).

1586. *'tis a boy that I have married.* The folio gives us the additional information that *'tis a Post-masters Boy*. Not, however, the son of a local official, as modern associations tempt one to imagine. To Elizabethans a post-master meant, of course, a keeper of posting horses, and his boy meant his stable-boy. But what, we may inquire, is such a person doing here unless he was somehow concerned with the mysterious pranks played on mine Host of the Garter?

1589. *I cried mum, and hee cried budget.* Nothing has been said in the quarto about the *'mumbudget'* countersign, and though the allusion would no doubt be intelligible on the stage it would also be quite gratuitous.

1614. *Go too you might haue stai'd for my good will.* This line, with its double edge, put into the mouth of the unreasonable Page, is quite masterly. There is nothing corresponding in the folio whatever, but the texts differ so widely at the close, and both are open to such serious suspicion, that it would be rash to regard either as on the whole the more original.



# LIST OF IRREGULAR READINGS OF THE FIRST QUARTO, TOGETHER WITH COLLATION OF THE SECOND, AND A FEW CORRECTIONS FROM THE FIRST FOLIO.

(The figures 1 and 2 indicate the quartos of 1602 and 1619 respectively. Where no figure appears the two quartos agree exactly. Many of the most drastic alterations in the second quarto are merely due to the compositor's desire to avoid turning over lines (e. g. ll. 6, 24, 509, 619, 1208, 1210, 1610, 1617). Where the quarto reading appears open to question I have often suggested what would be the strictly regular reading without wishing to imply that the alteration is one which should necessarily be made by a critical editor.)

6 maister 1 : M, 2  
8 *Slenders?* 1 : *Slender?* 2  
12 M. 1 : Maister 2  
16 haue it 1 : haue't 2  
20 *Shallowes* 1 : *Shallow* 2  
21 pud 1 : put 2  
22 M. 1 : Maister 2  
24 And the 1 : The 2  
    gartyr. 1 : Garter. 2  
29 heare? 1 : heare. 2  
35 answred. 1 : answered. 2  
50 besides 1 : beside 2  
57 honor (? *read* humor)  
95 your 1 : y'are 2  
99 run yon to 1 : run to 2  
    (*read* run you to)  
103 *Slendor?* 1 : *Slender?* 2  
109 prunes, 1 : pruines, 2  
110 hot 1 : hit 2  
117 be God 1 : by God 2  
126 it tis 1 : it is 2

126 Maister 1 : M. 2  
134 Falstaffes *Host* (*read* Fal-  
    staffe, *his Host*)  
141 bully, *Hercules* (*read* bully  
    *Hercules*,)  
    cassire. 1 : cashire. 2  
161 willd? 1 : weeld? 2  
187 lyre (leere *F*)  
193 legians 1 : Legions 2  
196 Heree's 1 : Heeres 2  
201 scorged (? *read* scorched)  
209 sword (fide *F*)  
    were 1 : weare 2  
216 avant. (auaunt, *F*)  
222 bace 1 : base 2  
228 humors I will (humors,  
    I : I will *F*)  
229 Iallowes, (yallowness, *F*)  
232 varlot 1 : varlet 2  
    vilde, (*read* vile,)  
235 Let vs 1 : Let's 2

- 244 kane (*read Cain*)  
 245 Kane (*read Cain*)  
 246 Ton, (*read Hugh*,)  
 250 it twere 1 : it were 2  
 251 M. 1 : Master 2  
 257 and 1 : if 2  
 262 auised 1 : aduis'd 2  
 264 a honest 1 : an honest 2  
     and 1 : if 2  
 265 come home and 1 : come  
     and 2  
 266 no who 1 : no hoe 2  
     (? *read no how*)  
     He is 1 : Hee's 2  
     parlowes 1 : parlous 2  
 271 whose 1 : who's 2  
     atdoore. 1 : at the doore. 2  
 274 come home fir 1 : come  
     fir 2  
 275 *And she* 1 : *She* 2  
 283 forget 1 : forgot 2  
 301 dat 1 : that 2  
 313 reason, (? *read reasons*,)  
 315 Your 1 : You are 2  
 316 Yon 1 : You 2  
 318 grant (*read grant*.)  
 319 where a 1 : wher he 2  
 323 methomorphifed ? 1 :  
     metaphorphofed ? 2  
 328 hand. (? *read honest*.)  
     this. 1 : this ? 2  
 329 neuer twice 1 : neuer  
     but twice 2  
 330 affurance 1 : assurance 2  
 372 ha 1 : haue 2  
 377 frites (frights *F*)  
 389 I am 1 : Ime 2  
 390 that is 1 : that's 2  
 393 *Mistresse* 1 : *Mi*. 2  
 393 *Mis*. 1 : *Mi*. 2  
 395 M. 1 : Master 2  
     said ? 1 : said. 2  
 399 speakes 1 : speake 2  
 400 certaine 1 : certainty 2  
 403 [fashion ...] Are : (? *read*  
     *Is*)  
 406 shrowd 1 : shrewd 2  
 412 ramping host  
     (ranting-Host *F*)  
 417 at hand. *M. Ford* 1 : at  
     hand *M. Ford*, 2  
 418 to you. 1 : t'e 2  
 421 a 1 : of 2  
     garter : 1 : Garter. 2  
 424 *talkes*. (? *read talk*.)  
 426 *Hu* 1 : *Hugh* 2  
     shal be, 1 : shalbe 2  
 430 shute (*suit F*)  
 433 *Rrooke*, 1 : *Brooke*, 2  
 434 My 1 : Thy 2 (*My F*)  
 441 *Page* : 1 : *Page*. 2  
 442 *Shallow* : 1 : *Shallow*. 2  
 443 *Page* : 1 : *Page*. 2  
 446 peace : 1 : peace. 2  
 453 [made ...] Scipped  
     (skippe *F*)  
 458 [fellowes] sticks (? *read*  
     stick)  
 468 beene 1 : bin 2  
 470 3. 1 : three 2  
 471 a 1 : haue 2  
 473 your 1 : y'are 2  
 475 tooked 1 : tooke it 2  
     (*read tooke't*)  
     ho- 1 : honesty 2  
     (honour *F*)  
 480 indanger 1 : endanger 2  
 482 throngto (*read throng:to*)

482 manner (Mannor F)  
 492 gotoo 1: go too 2  
 509 let me 1: I 2  
     one stands 1: one that  
     stands 2  
     vpon 1: on 2  
 516 nine: 1: nine. 2  
     birding, 1: birding 2  
     (read birding.)  
 520 arant 1: errant 2  
 524 they could 1: could  
     they 2  
     doo: 1: do. 2  
 526 inchantments: 1:  
     inchantments. 2  
 530 iealousie 1: iealous 2  
 534 *Fol.* 1: *Fal.* 2  
 546 bodie 1: booty 2  
 547 ha 1: haue 2  
 549 a the 1: ath the 2  
 553 *Fal.* 1: *For.* 2  
 555 your 1: y'are 2  
 556 I am 1: Ime 2  
 561 wood 1: would 2  
 573 20. 1: twenty 2  
 575 time. (read true.)  
 582 me? 1: me 2  
 584 I told (I haue told F)  
 591 veruentie (vehemency F)  
 594 proposterously 1:  
     preposterously 2  
 600 And 1: If 2  
 604 M. 1: master 2  
 608 8. and 9. 1: eight and  
     nine, 2  
 619 were very good 1: were  
     good 2  
 624 meator (Meteor F)  
 646 de 1: the 2

646 stall, 1: stal, 2 (? read  
     stile,)  
 649 *Rugabie*, 1: *Rugby*, 2  
 650 Hearing 1: Herring 2  
 651 *Page, my Host*, 1: *Page,*  
     *Host*, 2  
 655 to (*i. e.* two)  
 658 punto. The 1: punto:  
     the 2 (puncto, thy F)  
 659 distance: the montnce  
     is 1: distance, the  
     montnce is 2 (distance,  
     thy montant: Is F)  
 660 gallon? (*Galien?* F: ? read  
     *Galen?*)  
 661 escuolapis? 1: Escu-  
     olapis? 2 (*Esculapius?* F)  
     bullies taile, (bully-Stale?  
     F)  
 664 castallian (Castalion F:  
     ? read Castilian)  
     king vrinall. 1:  
     King, Vrinall. 2  
     (-king-Vrinall: F)  
 671 me 1: be 2 (is F)  
 674 as mockuater (as much  
     Mock-vater F)  
 679 dē, 1: den, 2 (read dē.)  
 680 And (*Hof.* And F)  
 681 bully, (read bully—)  
 683 Frogmore? 1:  
     Frogmore. 2  
 695 is a feasting 1: is  
     feasting 2  
 696 wear hir cried game:  
     (wooe her:  
     Cride-game, F)  
     bully (read bully?)  
 698 gessie 1: guests 2



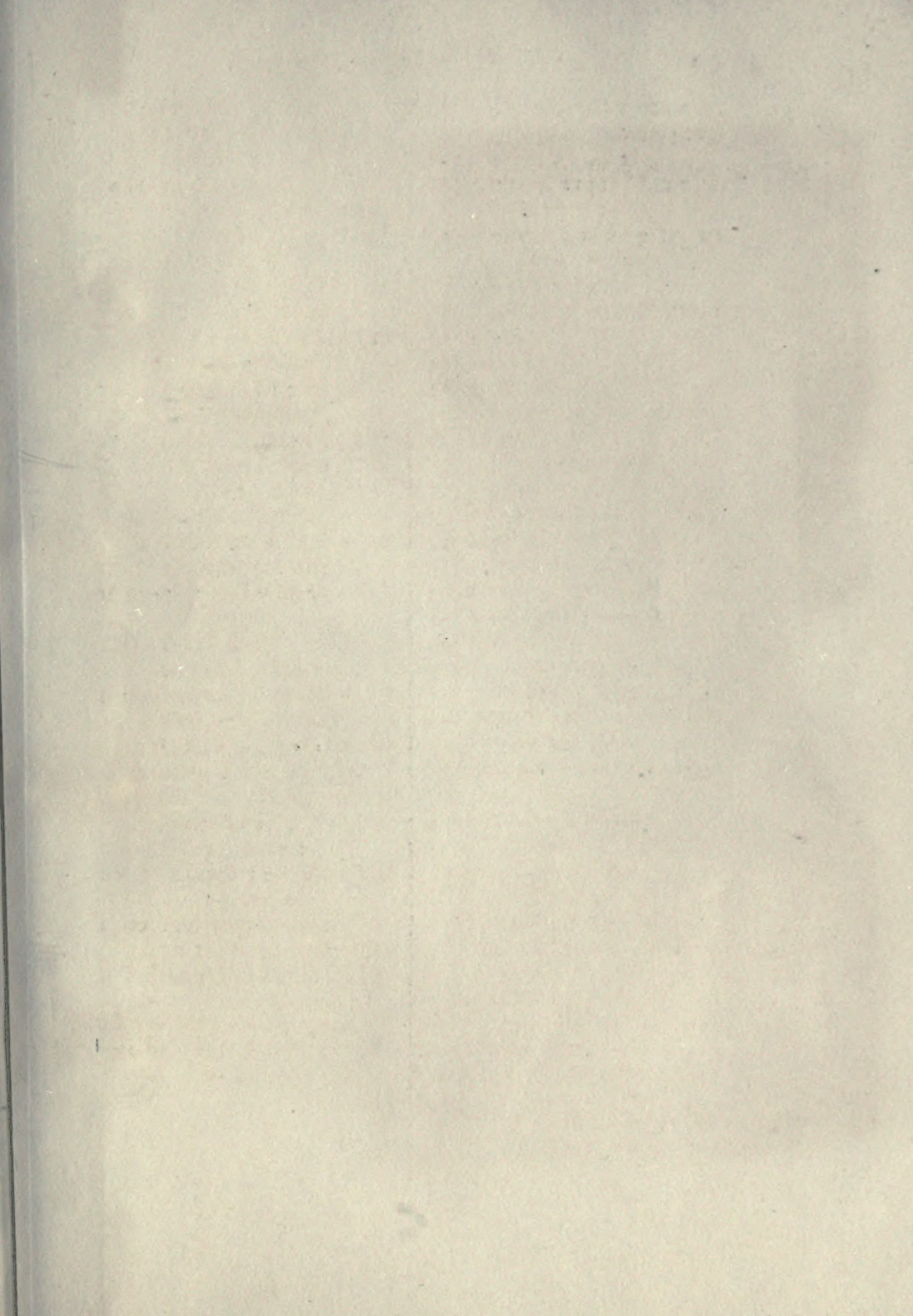
- 699 patinces. 1 : patients. 2  
 700 thy 1 : thine 2  
 715 riueres. 1 : riuers. 2  
 724 shallow, 1 : Shallow, 2  
 727 from 1 : frō 2 (from F)  
 734 is I 1 : is it I 2  
 737 one (his owne F)  
 739 intreate 1 : entreate 2  
 742 I am 1 : Ime 2  
 758 cockcomes, 1 : coxcomb, 2  
 760 Rogoby, 1 : Rugby, 2  
 761 I not 1 : not I 2  
 767 is 1 : be 2  
 771 Hu? 1 : Hugh? 2  
 773 tereftiall, (read tereftiall:)  
 774 So giue (read So : giue)  
 775 So boyes (read So: boyes)  
 778 Bardolfe laie 1 : Bardolfe,  
     lay 2 (? read Bardolfe  
     shall laie)  
 780 let vs 1 : let's 2  
 781 may (? read moy)  
 786 omnes 1 : omnes. 2  
 787 M. 1 : Master 2  
 791 guesse that comes 1 :  
     guests that come 2  
 795 your 1 : y'are 2  
 804 hartily : 1 : heartily. 2  
 807 carit, (carry't, F)  
 808 betmes (buttons F)  
     carite. (carry't. F)  
 811 [goods] goes (? read goe)  
 817 two: 1 : two 2 (read two.)  
 818 Hu 1 : Hu. 2  
 819 to, 1 : two, 2  
     tird : 1 : tird. 2  
 820 Hu, 1 : Hugh. 2  
     shame, 1 : shame. 2  
 821 wel, 1 : Well, 2  
 822 Maister 1 : M. 2  
     Pages : 1 : Pages. 2  
 824 Host 1 : Host. 2  
 825 Slender, 1 : Slender. 2  
 826 Host 1 : Host. 2  
 829 buck busket. 1 :  
     Buck-basket. 2  
 833 seruant. 1 : Seruant. 2  
     (read seruants.)  
 867 Mil. 1 : mistris 2  
 874 his 1 : this 2  
 878 your 1 : y'are 2  
 881 Here is 1 : Heeres 2  
 882 Gode 1 : Gods 2  
 889 counsell. (Aside. 1 :  
     counsell. 2  
 895 [men] carries (? read carrie)  
 909 Mis. 1 : Mis: Foord. 2  
 918 him : 1 : him so : 2  
 930 me : (read me.)  
 931 You (read Mis. For. You)  
 932 blame : 1 : blame. 2  
 934 without cause. 1 :  
     without a cause. 2  
 935 vell : 1 : vell. 2  
 937 it : 1 : it. 2  
     now : 1 : now 2 (read  
     now.)  
 948 your 1 : y'are 2  
 949 vdgme, 1 : vdge me, 2  
     Fordes 1 : Foord 2  
 950 wittes : 1 : wits. 2  
 951 omnes : 1 : omnes. 2  
 952 Falstaffe. 1 : Falstaffe, and  
     Bardolfe. 2  
 953 pottle sack presently : 1 :  
     pottle of sacke  
     presently. 2  
 959 and 1 : if 2

- 964 puppies in the litter :  
(Puppies, fifteene i'th  
litter : F)
- 965 and I : if 2
- 971 money. (Mummie. F)
- 994 *Quic* I : *Quic*. 2
- 1001 [matters] goes. (? read  
goe.)
- 1003 M. I : Master 2
- 1010 were euen amid I :  
were amid 2
- 1011 incounter, I :  
encounter, 2
- 1037 hors'hoo I : hors'hooe 2  
(Horse-|hoo F)
- 1040 shute I : fute 2
- 1042 M. I : Master 2
- 1044 I thus I : thus I 2
- 1047 alreadie : I : already. 2
- 1052-3 at at I : at 2
- 1060 wittold, I : wittoll, 2
- 1063 I I : Ile 2
- 1066 late : I : late. 2
- 1067 *Exit omnes*. (read *Exit*.)
- 1068 *Page*, I : *Anne Page*, 2
- 1085 Godes I : *Quick*. Gods 2
- 1086 *Page his* I : *Page*, his 2
- 1089 blame to I : blame you  
are to 2
- 1090 But I : Pray 2
- 1097 doings? I : doings, 2
- 1098 bid I : bad 2
- 1100 *Fen*. I : *Fenton*. 2
- 1102 an I : & 2
- 1116 All (? read *Shal*. All)
- 1116-17 All . . . *Anne*.  
(? belongs to *Shallow*.)
- 1121 be I : by 2  
vill I : will 2
- 1131 come you, I : come in,  
2 (? read come, you,)
- 1134 *omnes* I : all 2
- 1136, 1140, 1141. M. I :  
Master 2
- 1149 come home yet. I :  
come yet. 2
- 1159 you'r I : y'are 2
- 1165 *Mif. For.* I : *Mif. For.* 2
- 1167 your I : y'are 2
- 1180 God I : Gods 2
- 1182 *M. Ford*, I : *Foord*, 2  
*Priest*, I : *Hugh*, 2
- 1183 [*men*]carries (? read *carrie*)
- 1186 flaue, I : slaue, 2
- 1194 you. And if I : you, If  
2 (read you, and if)
- 1198 cloathes? I : cloths 2
- 1202 By so I : So 2
- 1208 Come mistris I : Mistris 2
- 1210 maidens I : maids 2
- 1211 A I : *For*. A 2  
house, I : house? 2
- 1219 *Sir Hu.* I : *Hu.* 2 (read  
*Sir Hu.*)
- 1228 I am I : Ime 2
- 1234 Stanger I : stranger 2  
horfe. (horfes : F)
- 1240 gueffe, I : guefts, 2
- 1243 *their* I : *and their* 2
- 1243-4 *and Slender*. *Syr* I :  
*Slender*, *and Sir* 2
- 1247 hnue I : haue 2
- 1265 *Horne* (*Herne* F) et pas-  
sim.
- 1267 [women . . .] Ses I :  
Saies 2 (? read Say)
- 1269 venture I : venter 2
- 1289 deuises I : deuice 2

- 1294 I am 1: Ime 2  
 1298 For, 1: For. 2  
 1299 moneth 1: month 2  
 1308 Antripophiginian 1:  
       Antripophigian 2  
       (Anthropophaginian F)  
 1315 Host. 1: host. *he*  
       *speakes aboue.* 2  
 1320 afat 1: a fat 2  
 1330 pray fir 1: pray you fir 2  
 1335 I tike, who 1: I Tike,  
       who 2 (I Sir: like  
       who F)  
 1337 fir. 1: fir. *Exit.* 2  
 1341 7. 1: seuen 2  
 1356 come 1: come 2  
 1357 de host 1: the Hosts 2  
       *Branford, 1: Brainford,* 2  
 1363 care 1: care 2  
 1365 Readings, 1: Redings 2  
 1370 cosened *Hugh,* and coy  
       *Bardolfe,* (read cosened,  
       hu and cry, *Bardolfe,*)  
 1372 worell 1: world 2  
 1390 haue bene beaten 1:  
       haue beaten 2  
 1391 a bene 1: haue bin 2  
 1396 Ile 1: And Ile 2  
 1407 mutally 1: mutually 2  
 1411 had (? read hath)  
       scare, (? read scene,)  
 1412 *Catlen,* (read *Eaton*)  
 1414 mother 1: mother's 2  
 1422 appointment 1:  
       appointed 2  
 1429 shalbe 1: shall be 2  
 1438 old 1: odde 2  
 1447 I I fir 1: I fir 2  
 1468 a sleepe, 1: asleepe, 2  
 1473 Where is 1: Wher's 2  
 1477 they are 1: th'are 2  
 1478 plew 1: blew 2  
 1479 begon, 1: be gone, 2  
 1483 *Hir* 1: *Sir* 2  
 1499 shure 1: sure 2  
       he is 1: hee's 2  
 1501 metamorphised 1:  
       metamorphosed 2  
 1504 *Tapers* 1: *Torches* 2  
 1505 It is 1: Tis 2  
 1520 [Fairies] hath (? read  
       haue)  
 1532 you so, 1: you, 2  
 1538 leaud 1: lewd 2  
 1546 and 1: if 2  
 1554 ridden 1: written 2  
 1563 here is 1: here's 2  
       all's 1: all is 2  
 1575 daughter's 1: daughter  
       is 2  
 1581 worell (cf. l. 1372)  
 1582 begod 1: by God 2  
 1593 *Anne.* 1: *Anne Page.* 2  
 1594 the man 1: he 2  
 1596 Curch 1: Church 2  
 1603 glanced 1: glanced. 2  
 1610 I yfaith 1: Ifaith 2  
       is wel plea-fed: 1: is  
       pleased. 2  
 1617 wil also dance 1: wil  
       dance 2  
       wed-dings. 1: wedding. 2  
 1618 let vs 1: let's 2  
 1622 shal you 1: you shall 2

N.B. In both quartos the form *Exit* is used indifferently as a singular or plural.









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Merry wives of Windsor

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